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Damn the Deficit, by John Kenneth Galbraith

C. Vann Woodward • Czeslaw Milosz on Catholicism • Pearl Bell

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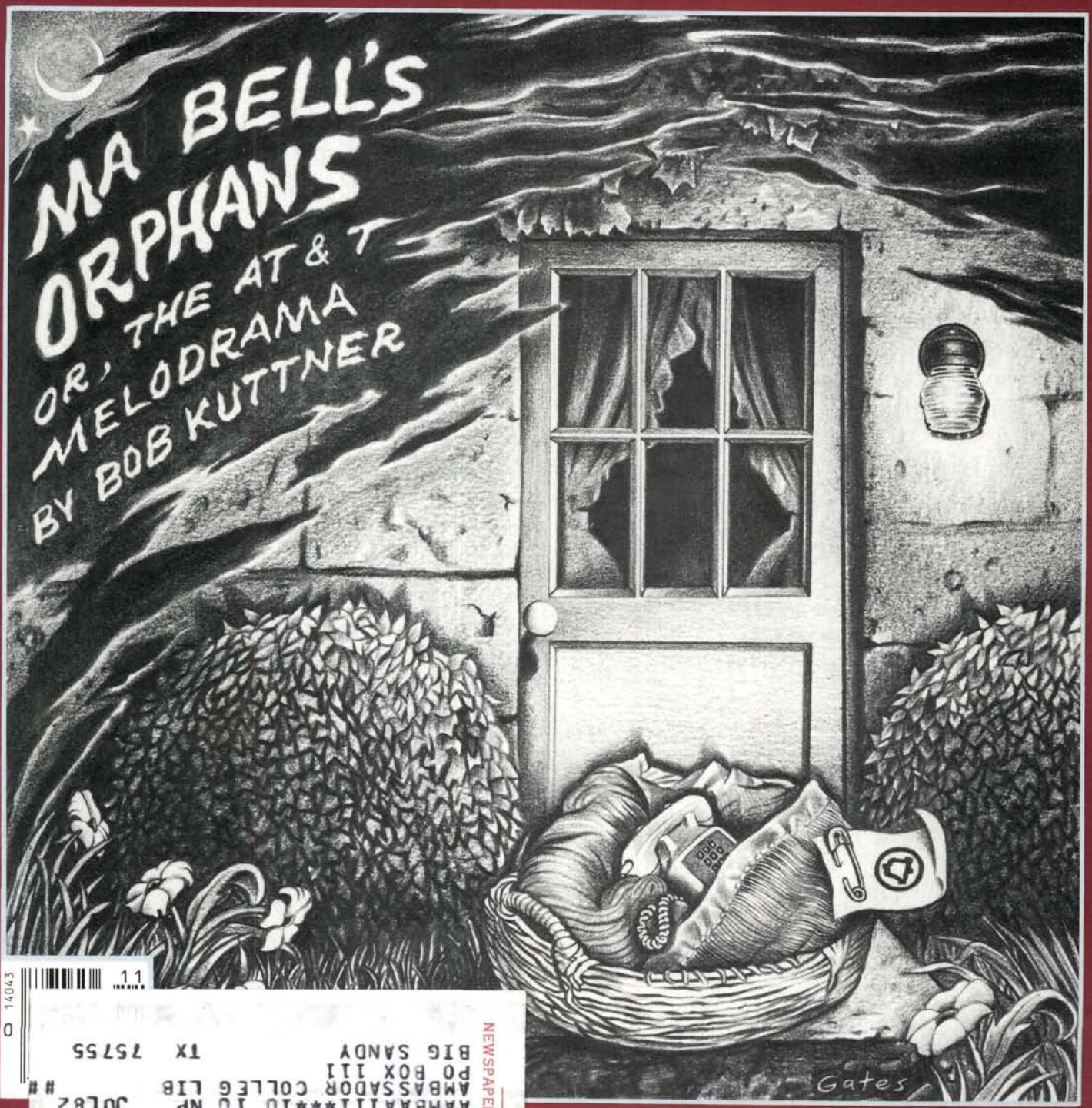

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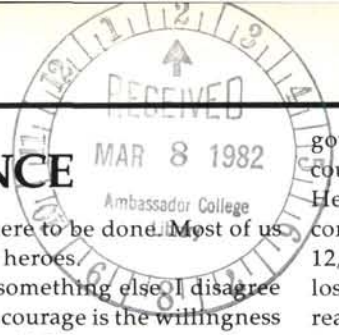

CORRESPONDENCE

ALTERNATIVES TO LITIGATION

To the editors:

Professor Jerold S. Auerbach should pose his catchy and clever conundrum about the relationship among law, justice, and alternatives to litigation ("Burger's Golden Calf," TNR, March 3) to the despairing and abused clientele waiting in line at the Manhattan summons court some weekday morning. Or to litigants who have been waiting for three years to have their civil complaint heard in some state court.

What Professor Auerbach and his like-minded paladins of due process fail to realize is that a significant portion of litigation in our society involves not constitutionally protected civil or property rights, but the fractured lives of people struggling simply to coexist in a complex, abrasive, impersonal world. The adversarial process, while a powerful force for the definition and protection of valued rights, frequently destroys the very capacity for coexistence and often generates more violence among angry, frustrated citizens whose conflicts have been enlarged by adversarial confrontation.

One final note: as a strong advocate of alternatives to litigation, I resent being lumped together with "politically conservative members of the bench and bar" who are leading a political backlash against the assertion of legal rights by the Have-Nots. I would remind Auerbach that the ABA has opposed unequivocally any dilution of the Legal Services Corporation, while his fellow-travelers in the crusade against alternatives to litigation in Congress, Senator Thurmond and Representative Ashbrook, are not hailed as champions of the legal rights of the downtrodden.

J. Michael Keating Jr.
Riverside, Rhode Island

HEROISM AND COURAGE

To the editors:

Although I agree with many of the ideas in Charles Krauthammer's reflection on "Courage" (Washington Diarist, TNR, February 3), semantically I differ with him. He is discussing heroism, not courage. Heroes display courage, just as Lenny Skutnik did, but generally are not aware at the time of the act that they will be labeled "heroes." They are doing what is there to be done. Most of us will never be heroes.

Courage is something else. I disagree with him that courage is the willingness to risk one's self for someone or something. It is many other things. I see courageous people everywhere. And yes, the hostages certainly had courage—but *not* heroism. Webster defines courage as "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." The hostages were not heroes, but they were people who endured with courage.

The world is full of people who show courage through enduring, persevering, meeting fears and dangers head on. Retitle the article "Heroism" and give credit to heroes for heroism and to others for various kinds of courage—even those who only "stand and wait."

Betty B. Butler
Evanston, Illinois

CLAY PIGEONS

To the editors:

Democracy in Guatemala is onion-skin thin, and through this facade we see a fraudulent electoral system. You refer in "Friendly Fire" (TNR, February 17) to the "fact" of elections in Central America as a sign of "encouragement." May I offer some observations that I made while a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala from 1966 to 1968 and again from 1976 to 1978?

Before Guatemala breaks out into total civil war, I urge you to go there and ask the man on the street if he believes in the electoral process; you won't get an answer, only a pause for the punch line; because elections in Guatemala are a joke. However, what's happening in Central America is not funny.

From 1945 to 1978, electoral absenteeism went from 4.5 to 63.5 percent; that's with only 50 percent of the population registered. In the last election 27 percent of the eligible voted. Why don't people vote? It's very simple: everyone's aware of what happens when the votes are tallied, and fraud would be a soft word to describe this process. The eligible voter expects fraud, so he stays away from the polls. What the elections really are, the passing of power from one government sector to another, does not constitute democracy. In Guatemala, "democracy" is in the hands of the government and not the people. Who could say it better than a Guatemalan? Here's an excerpt from *Diario El Grafico*, a conservative daily newspaper (March 12, 1978): "Who really lost? Democracy lost. It [the 1978 election] shows what really matters is not the people's will, but fraud and imposition."

It's painful to sit back in my U.S. easy chair and watch community development programs that I helped form be washed down a bloody drain. The federal taxes I paid last year could very well have bought the M-16 that shot the Indian community leader whom I worked with and was so proud of. It's disturbing to think that instead of doing something worthwhile, I was making clay pigeons.

Jim Klukas
Willmar, Minnesota

JFK'S LEGACY

To the editors:

Regarding Garry Wills's article, "The Kennedy Tapes" (TNR, February 24): John F. Kennedy awakened an entire generation of now middle-aged Americans to its role and responsibility in shaping this nation's destiny. To youth raised in the paternalistic lull of Ike and his contemporaries, Kennedy brought the amazing news that this land is *our* land, too, and that we owe it a contribution of service and dedication. Twenty years later, we are what Kennedy inspired us to become, too far into our lives to be undone by the personal shortcomings of a leader whose message was an appeal to what was best in all of us.

Mary Pat Clarke
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore, Maryland

B-MOVIE

To the editors:

Let us hope our man in the White House will be fortified with an ample supply of pills to reduce high blood pressure before he reads Nicholas von Hoffman's pulverizing attack on his budget ("Low-Budget Movie," TNR, March 3).

Speaking as a befuddled member of the middle class who is struggling to make heads or tails out of the Reagan military budget, I would like to put forth the radical argument that perhaps our whole philosophy of placing so much confidence in nonoperative

continued on page 4

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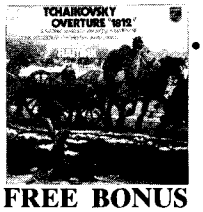

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

tanks, B-1 bombers, MX missiles, atomic powered submarines, and a few similarly powered aircraft carriers which, in this day of aircraft-borne missiles, must qualify as the modern military equivalent of the dinosaur, is misplaced.

Is it not logical to suppose that the Kremlin, having demonstrated a country-by-country policy of supporting insurgents, will follow this policy as long as it is successful? The men in the Kremlin are not fools, nor are they so suicidal as to launch a massive nuclear attack on the U.S. That is why the whole philosophy of massive military hardware accumulation is counterproductive and unnecessary, particularly since we already have enough warheads to blow up Russia 30 times over.

Furthermore, with the certain prospect of interest rates soaring under the spur of Reagan's monstrous deficits, an indefinite continuance of the current Reagan depression looms ahead. The man has painted himself into a corner.

Gordon K. Smith
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

THE GREEDY AMERICAN

To the editors:

I was horrified at Steven Emerson's exposé of the manipulation of American policy by the Saudis and their U.S. corporate mercenaries ("The Petrodollar Connection," TNR, February 17). If Mobil Oil, Bechtel, et al. have their way, Reagan may yet have the dubious distinction of becoming the first American viceroy for the House of Saud. All the while, and perhaps not coincidentally, Senator Mathias is fulminating against the Jewish Lobby. Someone should remind the Senator that the most subversive type of American is the Greedy American.

Richard S. Usem
San Francisco, California

THE BUSING DEBATE

To the editors:

One hopes that in your magazine it will be possible to get beyond slogans to reality, but the editorial, "Backing the Bus" (TNR, February 24), is either naive or disingenuous in its repetition of arguments in support of busing.

You write: "Judges only hand down busing orders when local school authorities shirk their responsibility to come up with effective plans to remedy proven acts of deliberate segregation." There were no "proven acts of deliberate segregation" in San Francisco, Denver, Cleveland, Detroit, and many other cities where busing was required to create an even pattern of school assignment by race in a situation where—as in all cities—blacks are concentrated in only some sections of the cities, and would, under nondiscriminatory geographical school zoning, be attending local schools that are mostly or all black. This is the typical situation in Northern and Western cities. By now, 28 years after Brown v. Board of Education, it is the typical pattern in Southern cities.

The issue, as the editorial does not make clear, is what are, to the Supreme Court and the lower courts they guide, "proven" acts of discrimination. A "proven" act can be a racial balancing program determined on by one school board—in the absence of any "proven" acts of discrimination—and overturned by the next. It can be the decision to build a school in a black neighborhood because the community wants a school there. It can be acknowledging the request of a black school principal for more black male teachers. It can be a disproportion by race in a school where attendance is by examination. These and other examples of "proven" acts of discrimination that would not persuade a schoolboy are to be found in my *Affirmative Discrimination*, Lino Graglia's *Disaster by Decree*, and other analyses of a disastrous policy. Why the tenderness toward quotas in public schools?

If it is impossible to stop the antibusing tide in the Senate, liberals have much to blame themselves for. For years there have been legislative alternatives proposed—by, for example, the former Congressman from North Carolina, Richardson Preyer, and Senator Joe Biden of Delaware, that would have been preferable. Liberals were not interested. These measures would have fulfilled exactly the adage of Justice John Marshall you quote, that victims of unconstitutional violation of their rights should be restored "to the position they would have occupied in the absence of the violation." In the school situation, that is the right to attend school with no racial requirement limiting the decision; that is, color-blindness in school assignment. It is that the Supreme Court intended in 1954, and which the American people supported. They do not support a process of school assignment by race (extending now to the various Hispanic groups, to the Asians in San Francisco, and who knows what other groups to come), which is the policy that the Supreme Court has fostered, with the assistance of some national Administrations and the supine acceptance of others, and which many liberals and civil rights activists have supported to the point where they have visited disaster on many cities. It does their case no credit that few of them submit, for their children, to the measures they wish to impose on others. This is a policy which THE NEW REPUBLIC should not support.

Nathan Glazer
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

VERMONT'S NUCLEAR FREEZE

To the editors:

Stop picking on Vermont! Usually your condescending scapegoating of us is all in fun, but this time you've gone too far. Your glib dismissal of our scheduled town meeting vote on a nuclear arms freeze ("Notebook," TNR, February 24) is nothing but a cheap shot, twisting an act of concerned citizens to fit your own twisted, outmoded cultural stereotypes. You dub us "a state that has heretofore professed indifference to the annihilation of the rest of the planet"—but exactly when was any such "indifference" professed? Since when does daring to be rural, situated more (but not much more) than a stone's throw from Manhattan, translate into indifference?

I'm a transplanted flatlander, and never have I encountered more antinuclear activism, more awareness of the real possibility and horrific consequences of nuclear war, than right here in these hills; in fact, it was here, in "sleepy" Vermont, that I myself became awakened to the dangers. Our activists aren't all Quakers or hippies. At a disarmament rally in Montpelier last summer, speakers included two Vermont Congressmen, economist (and longtime Vermont-dweller) John Kenneth Galbraith, a physician, a minister, and 13-year-old Nessa Rabin, organizer of the nationwide Children's Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament.

Stop stabbing at our grassroots efforts and turn your lance elsewhere—or better yet, save it for when it's really needed.

Cynthia Rubin
East Calais, Vermont

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... On litigation, heroism, Guatemala, &c.

6 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... SALVADORAN RIDDLE

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... THE VIETNAM ANALOGY
If Reagan wants to affect events in El Salvador, he must rule out the use of American troops.
STILL STONEWALLING
More on the press and the placating of the PLO.
NOTEBOOK

9 **JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH** ..... THE BUDGET AND THE BUST
The Administration's mixture of big deficits, and monetary policy to curb the resultant inflation, is doomed to create a Thatcher-style disaster.

13 **ROBERT PASTOR** ..... WINNING THROUGH NEGOTIATION
How an American policy of conditionality, limits, and negotiations could save El Salvador.

17 **BOB KUTTNER** ..... MA BELL'S BROKEN HOME
The saga of a great American corporation, a compliant Justice Department, twenty-two little orphans, and millions of telephones.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: LONG FAREWELL, QUICK GOODBYES
Remembering a great Japanese actor, Takashi Shimura; and three forgettable new films.

25 **CZESLAW MILOSZ** ..... ON CATHOLICISM
Can the devout mind look beyond the walls of dogmas and the mysteries of faith?

27 **PETER HEBBLETHWAITE** ..... THE VOYAGE OF PETER'S BARK
The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church by Malachi Martin
The Papacy Today by Francis X. Murphy
The Pope's Divisions by Peter Nichols

30 **C. VANN WOODWARD** ..... THE TAINTING OF AMERICA
Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism by Reginald Horsman

32 **PEARL BELL** ..... THE MEANING OF PR
The Truants: Adventures Among the Intellectuals by William Barrett

34 **IRVING FELDMAN** ..... POEM: *Talking to Fernando*

36 **DAVID M. KENNEDY** ..... THE WILSON WARS
Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography by Edwin A. Weinstein

38 **MARY JO SALTER** ..... BRIEF REVIEW
The Fortunate Traveller by Derek Walcott

42 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... MIND ROT

COVER Drawing by Donald Gates for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 17.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Salvadoran Riddle

Four years ago, almost to the day, Jimmy Carter staked his reputation on solving the Panama Canal riddle. Today Ronald Reagan has staked his reputation on solving the crisis in El Salvador. Carter won out by doing it his way, and it is questionable whether Reagan will by his different approach. It is a vivid contrast between the methods of the two men.

Carter is a born-again Christian who hopes to appeal to man's better nature. Reagan, by contrast, thinks there's a Communist under every bed. Back on March 16, 1978, Carter led the Senate to approve the first of two Panama Canal treaties, negotiated over the protest of U.S. hawks. He finished the job off the following month with ratification of the second treaty. Panama cheered the result, and the Caribbean relaxed a bit. The treaties ended a dispute begun in 1903.

Both Senate votes for ratification were 68 to 32. If opponents had had one more vote, they would have defeated ratification. The Constitution stipulates that simple majorities aren't enough (for treaties anyway). It requires two-thirds of the Senate vote. In short, in a legislative body of 535 members, 33 members have veto power in world affairs, a situation unlike that in any other democracy. (It kept us out of the League of Nations in 1920 and restored isolationism until World War II.)

Carter's low-keyed approach to the Panama problem brought inevitable sneers at his softness. John D. Lofton, then editor of the American Conservative Union's *Battle Line*, reported that Teddy Roosevelt was spinning in his grave. He cited one of TR's epigrams: "There is only one quality worse than hardness of the heart, and that is softness of the head!" Senator Barry Goldwater also charged that the U.S. was out-smarted in the deal. But Jimmy Carter, who has frequently been charged with ineffectiveness, quietly went ahead, and argued in a fireside chat that the treaties showed the U.S. demonstrating itself as the kind of great power Teddy Roosevelt "wished it to be."

The 30-month period for orderly transition to full application of Panama law ends on March 31. Further steps will continue until the actual Canal turn-over comes in 2000. There's no angry protest movement against the United States in Panama. Thus far the subdued Carter approach seems to have worked.

So now the problem is the election set for El Salvador on March 28. The situation is quite different from Panama, of course, but it deeply involves the prestige of President Reagan, just as Panama involved the prestige of Carter. Reagan is activist, militant. Something is going on every minute. An air of menace permeates foreign policy. We could pay more attention to it if weren't for the distraction of high interest rates and unemployment. The Soviets want to build a gas pipeline from Siberia. Stop them, cries Reagan to our NATO allies. He argues that Carter neglected defense, and he proposes a defense bill that for the next five years will total an awesome $1.6 trillion.

Carter was always tame. The Reaganites talk about the "decisive battle for Central America" being fought in El Salvador. The style is contagious. The *New York Times* quotes Treasury Secretary Donald Regan as saying that the economy, led by a recovery in the second quarter, will come "roaring back." These are not light matters which the President and his Cabinet discuss. Secretary of State Alexander Haig tells the Senate Intelligence Committee, according to Senator Goldwater, that he has "overwhelming and irrefutable" intelligence evidence that El Salvador's leftist guerrillas are controlled from outside.

Reagan himself has a flair for the dramatic, won honestly from his Hollywood background. Who could not be stirred when, during his recent trip to Cheyenne, he waved a cowboy hat and attacked the "hand-wringers in Washington"? He departed from the prepared text to say that "one of the reasons we must go forward [with the military budget] can be seen in these young people." Arm America, he says, and it will not be challenged. "A larger and increased possibility of war" looms if his proposed Pentagon budget is trimmed.

Washington is livelier than it was under Carter, but evidences of doubt creep in. Last week the House voted overwhelmingly for a nonbinding resolution urging the President to push for "unconditional discussions" among the major political factions in El Salvador. The resolution expresses an underlying distress. Several members of Congress who visited El Salvador recently have reaffirmed their opposition to further aid. They aren't sure what's going on.

Tension rises on the domestic front, too. Nearly everybody thinks we're in a crisis. Six powerful trade associations, including the American Bankers Association and the National Association of Mutual Savings Banks, publish joint advertisements in many cities saying that the nation must reduce deficits—by cutting defense, by delaying scheduled tax cuts, or by whatever means. Housing, they say, needs temporary but immediate help. This is a warning, a danger signal.

Is Reagan listening? Does he accept the challenge? The front page of the *New York Times* last week carried the headline, REAGAN REJECTS ADVICE TO ALTER BUDGET PROPOSAL. We should know his final response soon. Lack of it is causing uneasiness among Republicans. One response has already become known as the "different track" story, and it comes at the worst possible time for Reagan, who has plenty of other burdens to bear. Senator Bob Packwood, Republican of Oregon and chairman of the Senate Republican Campaign Committee, said in an interview with the Associated Press that the President causes dismay at meetings, because when he is told of a horrendous looming deficit, he "responds to the concerns of Republican leaders on a totally different track." He offers the Presidential quip.

This is merely a way of saying that when confronted with bad news, Reagan finds protection in whimsical response—something Lincoln did, too. It is the anecdotal defense. Packwood's subsequent apology won't help. He unleashed the story at a bad time, to a nation in doubt. The Reagan response should be positive action, at once, made in the context of as large a body of responsible advisers as he can muster. The country is in trouble, I think, and it's time to respond.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MARCH 17, 1982

THE VIETNAM ANALOGY

From the ground in Central America, El Salvador, with its helicopters and jungles, looks eerily like Vietnam. In the minds of Americans it looks even more so. But the grafting of one historical experience onto another has less to do with Salvadoran (or Vietnamese) reality than with American memory. Nevertheless, as the Washington cliché has it, the perception of reality is itself a reality, and this perception may well become the decisive reality shaping U.S. policy in El Salvador.

From Capitol Hill to Hollywood, the Vietnamization of El Salvador has rapidly become the dominant theme of this season's political theater. Representative Bill Alexander put it most plainly: "Most people don't know where El Salvador is, but the ghost of Vietnam hangs over every instance of military support or action in a foreign country." Ed Asner, a.k.a. Lou Grant, put it most tendentiously: "The situation in El Salvador is rapidly becoming another Vietnam War. . . . Tragically, we're on the wrong side in El Salvador." He followed up that declaration with a $25,000 check to the right side. (It was for medical—not military—aid, mind you; surely the guerrillas keep separate books for those things.)

The Vietnam analogy is not confined to the temples of national opinion. It is everywhere. How else to explain what can only be described as the hysterical domestic reaction to the sight of an American adviser carrying a rifle in a Salvadoran war zone? (Army regulations permit only pistols.) The story made the front page of nearly every newspaper in the country. Some network newscasts even spelled out the Vietnam analogy for those too obtuse to make the connection on their own. The President felt compelled to deny that it signaled any change in U.S. policy regarding the introduction of U.S. combat troops. That wasn't enough. He had to call the soldier home.

A few days later the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. had stationed an intelligence-gathering destroyer off the coast of El Salvador. Readers were reminded that in 1964 two similar intelligence destroyers, the Maddox and the Turner Joy, operating in the Gulf of Tonkin, were supposedly attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats, leading to a Congressional resolution under which President Johnson introduced combat troops, leading to "Vietnam."

There are profound disagreements in this country over the origin, the motives, and the morality of our Vietnam involvement. But there is no dispute about the result: it was an American disaster. Thus the Vietnamization of El Salvador is not just idle history. It leads directly to a clear policy—opposition to further U.S. support for the Duarte regime, because of the risk of further escalation and deeper U.S. involvement on the side of those who, like our friends in South Vietnam, cannot win and probably don't deserve to.

What is wrong with this whole line of argument is the premise. If El Salvador is analogous to Vietnam, it is not, as the critics insist, to Vietnam 1964 and the Gulf of Tonkin, but to Vietnam 1974 and our decision to restrict aid to the Thieu regime. In 1964 we had not yet had our "Vietnam"; by 1974 we had. In 1974 it was clear that this generation of Americans would no longer stomach the use of U.S. combat troops in a civil war abroad. That is still true today. If anyone in the present Administration had any doubts about that, the astonishingly swift and intense reaction to the rifle-toting adviser in El Salvador should have quickly dispelled them. The *Newsweek* poll showing 89 percent of Americans opposed to sending U.S. boys into El Salvador simply makes it official. One of the few unanimously accepted "lessons" of Vietnam is that one must not fight, and one cannot win, a war with no popular support. Ronald Reagan has said that on many occasions, and he must realize that to reenact Vietnam in El Salvador would be to destroy his Presidency.

The decision facing us now in El Salvador is a post-Vietnam decision about economic and military aid, not a pre-Vietnam decision about sending troops. We faced the same question in 1974 and 1975 over Vietnam and Angola. The questions then were whether to continue

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aid to the South Vietnamese and to Jonas Savimbe's UNITA in Angola. There was no serious thought about sending our boys to Angola, and the opposition to sending them back to Vietnam was overwhelming. Those were our first major post-Vietnam decisions, and we decided to wash our hands of civil wars in countries far way about which we knew nothing. We face the same post-Vietnam decision today in El Salvador. But we have one advantage. In 1974 we knew nothing of boat people, of Pol Pot, of autogenocide, of Cuban expeditionary forces. In 1974 we could still believe that with the end of the war the suffering of the Vietnamese and Angolan people would end.

No one doubts that a cut-off of U.S. aid will ensure the collapse of the Duarte government and guarantee a guerrilla victory at least as swift and total as North Vietnam's 1975 rout of South Vietnam. The question we face today is whether such an outcome is good for the Salvadoran people or for the U.S. We believe it would be a disaster for both. But we won't even get to that question, and the complicated moral and strategic calculus it demands, as long as the focus continues to be on keeping the U.S. out of another hopeless and unwinnable ground war. Fruitful debate over non-combat support for Duarte—and the conditions under which it should be considered—cannot even begin until the Vietnam analogy is disposed of.

President Reagan can do that in one stroke. He can stop his coy refusal to rule out, absolutely and finally, the introduction of U.S. combat troops into El Salvador. Somehow the Administration believes that ambiguity on this matter strengthens its hand and increases its options. It doesn't. Since there is no chance that the American people will permit American boys to fight in El Salvador, the threat is not credible to those it is supposed to intimidate: the Salvadoran guerrillas and their supporters in Havana and Moscow. Furthermore, if the Administration were foolish enough to actually carry out the implied threat of American ground involvement, it would cause a domestic upheaval reminiscent of the Vietnam era, a consummation much to be desired in Moscow. Since Mr. Reagan's own rationale for his Salvador policy is to thwart the designs of Moscow, it would be a spectacularly self-defeating policy.

Thus, to leave open the possibility of introducing U.S. combat troops into El Salvador is an empty threat. As in Vietnam, U.S. involvement on the ground would cause more damage to the U.S. than any temporary and surely reversible gain it might bring in the Salvador civil war. Keeping the troop option alive frightens not Moscow but Peoria. It heightens the otherwise irrational fear that we are facing the Gulf of Tonkin all over again. It feeds the nightmare that somehow we will again descend into the abyss.

The wisest move Mr. Reagan could make to strengthen both Mr. Duarte and U.S. support for him would be to declare unequivocally that he will not send U.S. troops. Such a move would put the Salvador conflict in its proper post-Vietnam context. It would broaden the Administration's domestic support not only for aid to the Duarte government but also for an attempt, which we hope will be made, to find a negotiated settlement of the conflict. And it would have the salutary side effect of reminding Mr. Duarte that we are willing to help, but that it is their country to save or lose.

Still Stonewalling

Humbug is what you ordinarily get when you criticize colleagues in the media, and with many angry phone calls that's exactly what we got after the appearance last week of Martin Peretz's "Fear and Trembling in Beirut: A Journalistic Cover-Up." The article alleged that Western journalists are intimidated by fear of terrorism into presenting an ever more uncritical view of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Confirmation for this came, in a letter to the March 2 *New York Times*, from an ironic source: Hatom Hussaini, director of the Palestine Information Office, who wrote that the current accusation "runs counter to the face that the PLO and the Palestinian people have been getting more favorable coverage in the media recently." We're tempted to rest our case, except that some important newspapers haven't even mentioned that it was made in the first place.

The cover-up continues. The *Washington Post*, for example, has not yet vouchsafed to its readers what many informed observers know and other periodicals have hinted at, that one of its correspondents, Jonathan Randal, was among the five American reporters abducted and menaced by a PLO faction last May. The silence of the *Post* has been broken, however, in one place: *Al Fajr*, a pro-PLO Arab daily published in Jerusalem. (Yes, pro-PLO publications are permitted in Israel). An event sufficiently newsworthy to have *Post* correspondent Bill Claiborne give an interview in *Al Fajr* is evidently not newsworthy enough for the *Post* to treat at home.

ABC is still stonewalling the questions raised by its coverage of Middle East affairs. After the telecasting of a Geraldo Rivera special on Palestinian terrorism and the PLO's Moscow connection, an ABC employee, Sean Toolan, who helped prepare the program, was murdered in Beirut. In the wake of the killing, ABC turned soft on the PLO and ever more hostile, as well as egregiously false, on Israel. Now it turns out—at least according to ABC staffers in New York and Washington—that not only were there threats made against ABC personnel in the Middle East, but that its Beirut correspondent, Jerry King, was shifted to Warsaw precisely because of those threats. (John Kifner also revealed in the *Times* last week that Larry Pintack of CBS

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left Beirut after threats on his life, and *Time* magazine has now conceded that one of its unnamed staffers—his name is Bill Marmon—was "threatened with death.") ABC still wasn't taking any chances. The more routine pressure at home—from various sectors of the Arab lobby—was also considerable. So ABC did a two-part special feature on "the other side of the PLO," a friendly interview with Yassir Arafat, and the tendentious and error-laden report on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank discussed in these pages last week. In discussions with ABC news staff initiated by Av Westin, a network vice president and executive producer of "20/20," it was made clear that the Arabs had now to be placated. At least one person who wouldn't play is no longer on the team. Or, as Tom Stoppard put it, "the press is a stalking horse masquerading as a sacred cow."

NOTEBOOK

☐ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Like many other artists and high-strung persons, Stravinsky is probably anything but self-assured, and possibly subject to periodic fears that he is not the man he takes himself to be. By what other hypothesis shall we explain his unfortunate arrogancies, and the over-golden opinions of his own performances which he frequently displays? They are all overbalanced and disproportionate, these assertions of the perfection of 'Le Sacre,' 'Les Noces' and 'Oedipus Rex,' as the high moment of the rest of his compositions. They all protest too much, and promulgate the very doubts they attempt to meet." ("Stravinsky; Gabrilowitsch; Fantin-Latour," by Paul Rosenfeld, March 16, 1932.)

Mr. Reagan's deficit, and what to do about it.

THE BUDGET AND THE BUST

BY JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

ON THE CONSEQUENCES of President Reagan's budget I find myself in harmony with the great majority of other economists and the instincts of the American people at large. Indeed, for the first time in my professional life, stretching now over half a century, there is a broad unity of view extending from Wall Street and the conservative economists of the American Enterprise Institute to my liberal co-religionists. All manifest a concerned opposition to the economic design being offered for the years 1983 and thereafter.

The surface concern is with the deficits that are being projected: $91.5 billion in 1983, similarly massive figures for the years following. This concern has been deepened by the imaginative fudging of the figures to get the deficit down to the stated levels. It is likely that the gap between revenues and real expenditures will be much greater; indeed, the reliance on monetary policy to curb inflation ensures it. The sound instinct of the American people is that deficits of this magnitude are unwise and dangerous. Nor do I believe that people accept as a defense that all budget problems—indeed, all economic problems—are the inheritance of previous Administrations. This, the archaeological alibi, must never be taken seriously. All Administrations, of whatever political color, must be held firmly responsible for what happens in their own time. Otherwise, one day, some imaginative economist will attribute his failures to the erroneous economic framework established by Alexander Hamilton.

The problem of the deficit lies deeper than in the fact that more money is spent than received. It lies in the constraints and contradictions that this imposes on other economic policy.

Specifically, in an economy with a strong tendency to inflation, there are only three countering lines of policy. One is direct restraint on wages and prices in the highly organized sector of the economy. This the Administration eschews. The second is restraint on inflation through the budget. This the prospective deficit denies; as one cannot sink and swim at the same time, so one cannot have a large budget deficit and fiscal restraint at the same time.

There remains only monetary policy as an agent against inflation. Prayer aside, it is the only recourse. That a flaccid fiscal policy places the burden on monetary policy the Administration does not deny. It so affirms. This year's *Economic Report of the President* says flatly that a "deficit financed by money creation will have persistent inflationary consequences." These in-

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flationary consequences, it follows, can only be avoided by a firm refusal of the Federal Reserve to allow such money creation: in short, by rigorously stern monetary policy.

Here we encounter the first of the contradictions. Control of the money supply, the essence of monetary policy, is far more difficult than once imagined by its advocates. But if the effort is sufficiently pressed, it will work. It is working now. The question is the cost. There is no mystery in how monetary policy works against inflation. It works by restraining bank lending and the subsequent bank deposit and other money creation, and the spending therefrom. It does this primarily through high interest rates; these put the price of credit beyond the reach of would-be borrowers. From the constraint imposed on lending comes reduced spending for capital and consumer goods, a recession in economic activity, and, if not lower prices, at least a lessened rate of inflation. That has been the effect of the policy in these last months. The recession we now experience was not an adventitious or accidental thing. It was the scheduled result of the policy we are now using against inflation, for it is through a recession such as we are now experiencing that monetary policy works.

A further contradiction in the budget prospect will now be obvious. The budget deficit, as currently projected, assumes an expansion in real output in calendar year 1983 of 5.8 percent. But if inflation is to be controlled, the monetary policy will have to be sufficiently restrictive so as to deny any considerable expansion in output. Perhaps, as in these last months, it will require a contraction in output. (Inflation is not a one-time thing that, once extruded from the system, is like some poison gone for good.) The effect of the restrictive money policy that the deficit requires will, in turn, cut down on tax revenues and increase payments under the various entitlement programs—and thus increase the deficit. There is nothing hypothetical about this prospect. It is precisely what has happened in Britain as the British government has followed similar budget policies with a similar reliance on monetary policy. Economics is not a compassionate thing. It does not deal gently with those who pursue such basically contradictory policies.

A RECESSION has a restraining effect on spending in general and thus on prices. But monetary policy also has a more specific effect on those industries that are particularly dependent on borrowed money—what are coming to be called the credit-sensitive industries. Thus it works generally on the auto industry by causing fewer people to buy cars. But it has a more specific effect by cutting back, through high interest rates, on lending for the purchase of cars. It also raises the cost of credit to dealers and thus the cost of carrying inventory, with the further effect of putting some out of business. These effects we shall continue to have so long as we are forced by deficit financing to rely on monetary policy to dampen inflation—for that, to repeat, is the way it works.

There is a similar selective effect on the other credit-sensitive industries. Reduced demand from the recession acts against farm prices in general, with ancillary and highly visible effects on the farm equipment industry. The policy similarly singles out the housing, construction, and real estate industries, and small business in general, where the failure rate last year reached the highest level, one year excepted, since the Great Depression. This is the way monetary policy is working and is meant to work. These are the consequences we must expect if budget deficits require a continued reliance on monetary policy as the alternative to severe inflation.

WE HAVE HEARD much from liberals and the trade unions of the effect of monetary policy on employment—of the social cruelty of a policy that works by making unemployment the restraining influence on wages, and that, at the most optimistic, promises unemployment in the range of 8 percent of the labor force. (It would be much less painful to have a direct restraint on wages rather than the sanguinary, indirect restraint of the present monetary policy.) But the cruelty of the policy extends also to car dealers, home builders, construction firms, merchants, and farmers. This is small business; most small-business people are Republicans; they have often been called the backbone of the party. No one can accuse this Administration of sparing its own.

This is the policy and punishment that, in the absence of any fiscal restraint, will have to be continued and intensified in the months ahead—the policy that is made necessary, always assuming that inflation is to be contained, by the deficits.

There are three further consequences of the present policy. First, it is from borrowing for investment that we get improvement in productivity. High interest rates squelch such investment, especially by smaller enterprises. The recession by which monetary policy suppresses inflation also has an adverse effect on productivity. There is no mystery as to why this should be so. It is when business is expanding and firms are operating at or near capacity that new plant is wanted and new investment made. New plant is almost always more efficient than old. The years of high interest rates have, in virtually all countries, been years of low productivity gains.

A continuation of the monetary policy that the prospective large deficits will require will also have a deeply damaging effect on the international financial system. The high interest rates here draw funds from the other industrial countries. In defense, they are forced to raise *their* interest rates. In such fashion we export our economic policy—including the associated unemployment and recession—to our friends abroad.

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This is no hypothetical prospect: in recent weeks, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, the German Chancellor, the head of the Bundesbank in Germany, the President of France, the Belgian Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister of Canada have all expressed deep concern, verging on anguish, over our policy. Rarely have we promoted such unity. If our policy continues, the European countries, acting through European monetary arrangements now in place, will be strongly tempted to control capital outflows, therewith to lower their interest rates and thus get control over their own policy. Few European leaders wish to see the world economic system broken in two; but many would accept it as an alternative to the disastrous policies that Washington's fiscal policy is otherwise forcing upon them.

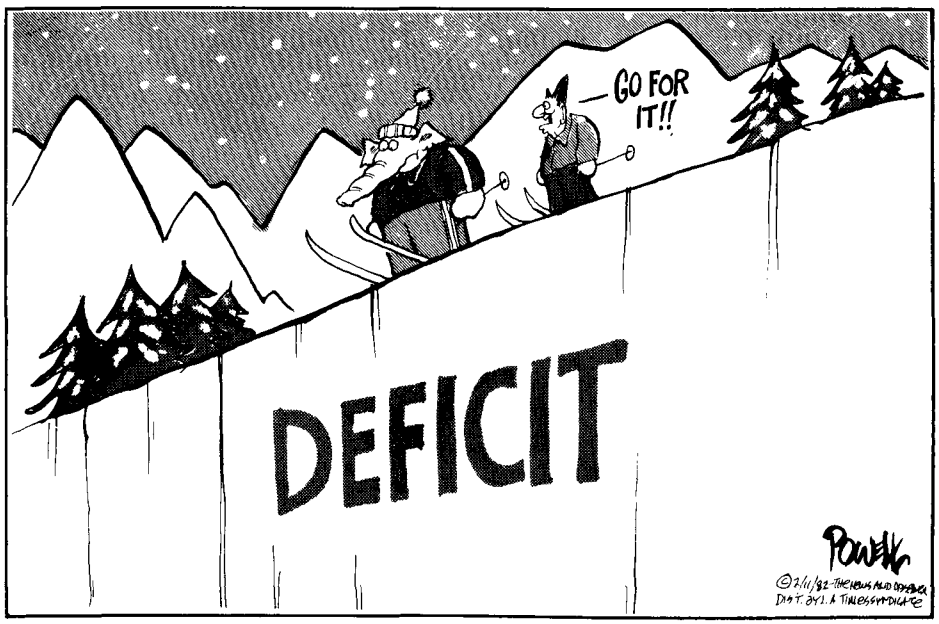
Finally, the deficits now in prospect and the countering monetary action make nonsense of the talk of a supply-side economics—of a vigorous expansion in the economy unleashed by the tax cuts. This was always an exceptionally dubious design. But not even the most ardent advocates, men who have shown that they will believe anything, can suppose that there can be a vigorous supply-side expansion in combination with tight monetary restraint to control inflation. Those who so suggest, were they doctors, would tell an obese patient with a large appetite that he had only to eat a great deal more in order to grow thin. This is an economics guided not by what is right, but by what people looking for a painless life prefer to hear.

Let it be noted that it is no case for the present budget that governments in the past deliberately resorted to deficit-financing. The deficit-financing of the Depression era was undertaken when prices were falling and interest rates at all-but-nominal levels. The massive deflationary tendencies of the time allowed, indeed required, *both* an easier monetary policy and an expansive fiscal policy. The case of the Kennedy-Johnson tax reductions is also cited. That too was a time of nearly stable prices and of low interest rates; and with the tax reduction of that time also went pressure on the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates. No lessons from these periods are applicable to a time when inflation is a central concern and when fiscal irresponsibility enhances the emphasis on monetary policy.

Let me now turn to remedies—to what needs to be done. I shall pass over the proposed cuts in social and other civilian expenditures. Much has been said about this and about the consequences. This expenditure, much of it on behalf of the poorest of our people, is not wasteful, dishonest, or out of control. Rather, it is the expression of compassion and concern that all modern industrial states have manifested for the least protected of their citizens. Our expenditures for this purpose have not, in relative terms, been high; in relation to gross national product they have been lower than those of the other major industrial countries with the exception of Japan. It is such expenditure that has tempered the rough edges of the economic system and helped ensure its survival. Social tranquility is not less important for conservatives than for liberals. It serves all.

The military budget does call for comment and action. All know of the factors that determine its scale; some of them have nothing to do with defense. To the calculation of military need is added what serves bureaucratic interest, what serves the competition between the services, and what serves, often at military cost, the technical dynamic of gadgetry—the belief that whatever is technically more arcane is always better. To this is added the large influence, which no one denies, of the weapons firms. Finally there is the protection that comes from political fear. In this day and age motherhood can be criticized; but mention Russia and the bravest men, politically speaking, take to the hills.

There is a question as to whether military expenditures at their present and projected levels add to our national strength. The history on this matter is persuasive. During the 1970s we spent, in round figures, a hundred billion dollars annually on the defense establishment, for a total for the decade of roughly a thousand billion (in constant 1976 dollars). Capital in this magnitude could be used for arms; it could be used for private capital investment; it could not be used for both. If an appreciable part of this outlay had gone into the improvement of our industrial plant—as it would



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have, had it not been requisitioned by the government—no one can doubt that the American economy would be stronger today. And from this stronger economic position would have come, in turn, the economic primacy and political prestige that were enjoyed in the early years following World War II. It was economic, not military, strength on which the American world position then depended.

There is striking empirical evidence of the industrial effect of the arms race, as I have argued recently in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. In modern times the American competitive position has declined, specifically in relation to that of Germany and Japan. We are not, it is generally believed, less intelligent than the Germans or Japanese. The American raw material and energy base is not less good—indeed, it is far better. Germany spends more per capita on social services than does the United States; Japan does not spend greatly less. The difference is that the Germans and Japanese have been using their capital to replace old civilian plant and build new and better plant. The United States has been using much more of its capital for industrially limited or sterile military purposes.

Through the 1970s the United States used from 5 to 8 percent of its gross national product for military purposes. The Germans during this decade used between 3 and 4 percent—in most years relatively about half as much. The Japanese in these ten years devoted less than 1 percent of their gross national product annually to military use. In 1977, a fairly typical year, American military spending was $441 per capita; that of Germany was $252 per capita; that of Japan a mere $47 per capita.

IT WAS FROM the capital so saved and invested that a substantial share of the civilian investment came which brought these countries to the industrial eminence that now so successfully challenges our own. Again the figures are striking. Through the 1970s our investment in fixed nonmilitary and nonresidential investment ranged from 16.9 percent of gross national product to 19 percent. That of Germany began where ours reached its peak; it ranged upward from 20.6 to 26.7 percent of gross national product. The Japanese range in these years was even greater—from 31 percent to a towering 36.6 percent. The investment in improvement of civilian plant was broadly the reciprocal of what went for weapons. No one looking at these figures can doubt that our military spending has been at cost to our industrial eminence and to the prestige and influence that go therewith. Certainly no one looking at these figures from the past can view the projected increases in the military budget with equanimity. The Administration itself affirms in the *Economic Report of the President* that these increases will be at cost to private capital formation. Is it really sensible to sacrifice our industrial eminence to a military budget that comprises so many elements so slightly related to any valid national concept of security? Lurking at the back of much past defense calculation has been the notion that we could somehow spend the Soviet Union into submission. It is a thought we can no longer tolerate, if, indeed, we ever could.

So, by all means, let us freeze the military budget along the lines proposed by Senator Ernest Hollings. Let us then have a serious look for savings—a look at the rehabilitation of those two old battleships, museum pieces both; at the B-1 bomber with its four or five years of useful survival; at aircraft carriers that in modern conflict would have to be rushed to the nearest harbor and might not make it; at the massive overkill in the strategic forces. And let there be serious pressure for an arms control agreement. (The issues here, needless to say, go beyond economics to survival.) The military budget has a highly leveraged relationship to the civilian budget. A modest reduction in marginal military gadgetry frees a large number of dollars for civilian need or for covering the deficit. We would be wise to use this leverage to the full.

HOWEVER VIGOROUS and sustained the movement on the military budget, the deficit, or some of it, will remain. That means taxes must be raised. Let there be no flinching at this prospect; and let there be no doubt on one basic and indispensable point. Higher taxes are far better for the economy than higher interest rates. Investment, productivity, and economic growth are consistent, or can be made consistent, with higher taxes. They cannot be reconciled with the high interest rates which are the alternative.

There should be prompt repeal of the corporate tax concessions, including the transfer of tax credits. I would also make a strong case for the windfall tax on gains from oil and gas deregulation. But the obvious and practical action is to defer the tax reductions scheduled for this coming summer and for a year hence. Nothing would have a more immediate and positive effect. There would be a prompt rally in the stock market; interest rates would fall and bond prices would rise; economic activity in the credit-sensitive industries would respond. I am never sanguine about economic predictions, including, and perhaps especially, my own. This one I make with a confidence that would be widely shared.

I urge two final points. Let us be very careful about any action, however disguised by rhetoric, which praises local responsibility or a new federalism and which transfers costs to state and especially to local governments. All public action must take account of one of the major features, one can say flaws, of the American fiscal system. The government of the United States, with its access to diverse tax sources and the tendency of its revenue sources to keep abreast of inflation, is by nature one of the best-financed units of government anywhere in the world. And, over the last half-century, nothing has been so persistently evident

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and so grievously underestimated as the costs of operating the modern large city at any tolerable level of safety, decency, and compassion. When people live in close juxtaposition, the costs of government go up exponentially. And they go up on a tax base that, unlike the taxable resources of the federal government, is circumscribed. We have already had, in the last budget, a major shift in fiscal responsibility from the best-financed unit of our system of government to the ones in the greatest inherent difficulty. It is a path on which we should proceed no farther. So to proceed will not strengthen local governments; it will weaken them. The new federalism, there is little doubt, is a singularly transparent device for shifting public costs away from the personal and corporate income tax bases of the federal government, with the particular incidence on the affluent, to the more regressive sales and property tax bases of states and localities.

Mr. David Stockman, with admirable candor, said last year that the concept of supply-side economics and its associated rhetoric were a cover for the reduction of income taxes in the upper brackets. That conservatives should seek a reduction in the upper-income tax brackets is not remarkable; no less than liberals, conservatives have their constituency. What is not forgivable is that conservatives should disguise their purposes behind supply-side or new federalist rhetoric. Plain speech is proper to people of all political faiths.

Conservatives especially should not accept the deficit in its prospective magnitude. There is room for ideological difference on how public services should be financed. There is no room for difference on the question of whether or not it should be financed. Deficits on the scale now projected effectively remove all freedom of economic action and commit the government to a monetary policy that we are learning—as the British have learned—is painfully repressive and potentially disastrous.

Congress has the seed of a better idea for El Salvador.

WINNING THROUGH NEGOTIATION

BY ROBERT PASTOR

THE UNITED STATES is becoming so worried about "another Vietnam" in El Salvador that it is about to repeat an historical error of a quite different sort—the error that led to foreign policy failures in Cyprus and in Angola and on emigration from the Soviet Union and on human rights in the mid-1970s. In each instance, Congress sent the executive branch a foreign policy signal; in each instance, that signal was ignored. The result, predictably, was that every time the executive went back to Congress with additional requests, Congress shortened the leash, limiting the flexibility necessary for good diplomacy. In the end there was no flexibility, and no U.S. interest was served. Then the executive blamed Congress—for alienating Turkey, for "losing" Angola, for reducing emigration from the Soviet Union, for antagonizing friends.

We seem to be headed in the same self-defeating direction in El Salvador. Congress is sending a foreign policy signal to the executive, and the executive doesn't appear to be listening. Last December, Congress amended the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981 to instruct the President to withhold aid to the government of El Salvador unless that government "is making a concerted and significant effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights," is gaining control over its security forces, is carrying out its reforms, and is demonstrating a "good faith effort to begin discussions with all major political factions in El Salvador." In the same law, Congress wrote that economic and military aid from the United States "should be used to encourage" these and other specific objectives, including a complete investigation of the deaths of the American religious workers.

Congress left the President some discretion on how to implement these provisions. Mr. Reagan took every bit of it and more; indeed, he pursued a different policy entirely. Instead of using the aid to pursue the seven objectives in the law, he is using it to pursue one: the defeat of the guerrillas. Instead of encouraging the Salvadoran government to make a good faith effort to open discussions with the left, he has supported the

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insistence by José Napoleón Duarte's government on a wholly disingenuous precondition to discussions: that the left lay down its arms.

So the Reagan Administration should not be surprised if, in the next round of requests for aid, Congress limits the discretion and shortens the leash. We can then expect, before too long, to hear Secretary of State Alexander Haig complain that Congress is tying his hands, that those military options he is forever "ruling neither out nor in" are in fact ruled out. And then, when El Salvador goes the way of Cuba, the Reagan Administration will blame Congress. Congress will blame the Administration. And the country will blame them both.

THERE IS a better way. Although Congress is far from unified, one can identify the seeds of an emerging policy toward El Salvador in the 1981 law and in the view of those who pressed for the amendment, including Representatives Michael Barnes, Stephen Solarz, and Jonathan Bingham, and Senators Paul Tsongas and Christopher Dodd. In its February 17 editorial, "Friendly Fire," THE NEW REPUBLIC outlined a policy that is quite consistent with the Congressional initiative. TNR shares Congress's uncertainty about whether such a policy would work. But these seeds, properly tended, are the basis for a successful U.S. strategy.

The Administration believes that there is one war in El Salvador—against the Communists—and that the U.S. should do all that is necessary to win it. Congress believes that there's a second war—against the repression by the right and the security forces—and that unless the Salvadoran government succeeds in winning this war, it won't win the one against the left. Congress is correct. The three seeds of the Congressional strategy are conditionality, negotiations, and limits. Here is a look at each—along with the Administration's objections, and a suggestion of what might happen if the Administration stopped objecting to these ideas and started implementing them.

(1) *Conditionality*. Strict conditionality would mean a a credible threat to reduce aid if concerns on human rights, etc., are not met. The Administration objects to this because it does not want to desert or undermine a friend in a moment of crisis. In addition, the Administration accepts the argument of El Salvador's military high command that to insist on disciplining the security forces is to risk dividing and weakening them. The result is that the Administration is likely to continue to urge the military to clean up its act and the government to implement the reforms, but it will never threaten or reduce aid if progress is not evident in these areas.

The strategy of conditionality, like the strategy of nonviolence, cannot work if a government is implacable or without moral scruples; it wouldn't work, for example, in Guatemala or the Soviet Union. But it can work—indeed, has worked—in El Salvador, because both the civilian leadership (Duarte) and the military leadership (Defense Minister José García and Junta member Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez) understand that reform helps the government and repression hurts it. Duarte can't control the repression because the Reagan Administration has denied him the leverage necessary to command the respect of the military. García and Gutiérrez won't do it on their own because they are too busy fighting the war, and because they don't want to do anything that could risk demoralizing part of the military and perhaps even stimulating the emergence of new rightist paramilitary forces which could threaten their control. They will take such risks only if they are informed that they will risk even more—all U.S. and international support—if they don't. But as long as Mr. Haig is saying "we will do whatever is necessary" to defeat the left in El Salvador, he is giving the military a blank check and telling the government not to take the risk of disciplining its security forces.

García and Gutiérrez need to be pushed to do what they know they must do but won't do on their own. Let me cite some cases to show that a strategy of conditionality could work.

Barely two months after overthrowing the "old order" on October 15, 1979, the first revolutionary government in El Salvador came apart, unable to translate its lofty pronouncements for reform and social justice into policy. Few inside or outside El Salvador thought that the new Christian Democratic-military coalition would have any more success implementing the reforms or even surviving. But with firm pressure from the U.S.—the threat to suspend aid, the promise to increase it once the reforms were promulgated—the Salvadoran government announced the reforms and began the long, hard process of carrying them out. There had been warnings that the reforms would weaken and divide the government. Instead, the reforms weakened the left and helped the government widen its precarious base.

EVEN IN THE closing days of the Carter Administration, the blunt instrument of conditionality succeeded in moving the military. In December 1980, after the wanton murder of six leftist democratic leaders and of four American religious workers, President Carter suspended all economic and military aid until the military complied with the ultimatum of the Christian Democrats in the government, who had threatened to withdraw unless the violence was brought under control. The military agreed to investigate the murders of the Americans, to reorganize the government to give greater authority to Duarte, and to transfer or dismiss a dozen key military officers associated with the repression, including Vice Minister of Defense Nicholas Carranza. In return, the U.S. reactivated economic and "nonlethal" military aid, but withheld "lethal" military aid until the government

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took six additional specific steps in the murder investigation, including giving the U.S. a list of the security forces in the area. In early January 1981, after the government took these six steps, and after the leftist offensive on January 10 revealed that the left had covertly received large quantities of military supplies, the U.S. released $5 million of military aid. Not surprisingly, human rights progress has halted since the Reagan Administration discarded the lever of conditionality. But there continues to be evidence that conditionality can work. How else can one explain why the Salvadoran government has taken another step forward in the religious workers' case now that the Reagan Administration is about to go to Capitol Hill to ask for more funding?

CONDITIONALITY can work, but four lessons based on the experience of the Carter years are worth noting. First, even though Salvadoran military chiefs—and perhaps even Duarte—will complain about having their arms twisted in public, the U.S. should never rule out public pressure even as it tries to do as much as possible privately. Second, after consulting with the Christian Democrats and others genuinely concerned about the repression, the U.S. should name specific indicators that would demonstrate the military's sincerity in gaining control of the violence. Such indicators could include: the dismissal of Colonel Francisco Antonio Moran, head of the Treasury Police; the abolition of the Treasury Police and the National Guard or their consolidation under the army; completion within six months of the trial of the six National Guardsmen accused of murdering the religious workers; and reassignment—either out of the country or into prison—of a dozen or so of the most repressive officers. Third, each large step—like the agrarian reform—actually represents hundreds of microscopic steps that require constant prodding and pushing. There were something like two hundred individual steps between the murder of the religious workers and the indictments of the six National Guardsmen. Such procrastination is infuriating, but the U.S. cannot afford to relax the pressure. Fourth, the U.S. should be realistic and recognize that success may be partial. Bargaining over repression is gruesome, but it is the only choice between giving up on the military or giving in to its atrocities.

(2) *Negotiations.* The closest both sides have come to talking was in September 1980, when Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas offered to mediate. Duarte quickly accepted on behalf of the government, and U.S. Ambassador Robert White used his influence to keep the military from vetoing it. The leftists, however, rejected the offer, insisting instead on two preconditions: first, they would negotiate only with the U.S.; and second, they would negotiate only if there were a restructuring of the armed forces and dismissal of García, Gutiérrez, and others. That was the state-of-play on negotiations until June 1981, when the international democratic left convinced the guerrillas that they could regain the political initiative if they dropped the two preconditions. They did so. The response of the government and the Reagan Administration was to block negotiations by interposing a new precondition of their own: negotiations could begin only when the left gave up their arms.

The Reagan Administration says it would be wrong to negotiate with—and thereby to legitimize—those who seek to change the government by violence. But that notion, applied consistently, would also preclude the U.S. from talking to the current government, which came to power by force. A more important (and sustainable) view is that the U.S. should not in these circumstances allow itself to appear as the obstacle to negotiations that could reduce violence. The Administration's second objection is more pragmatic: if the Communists are permitted a power-sharing arrangement through negotiations, they will ultimately take over the government. However, if the Administration believes that only the left can manipulate the negotiations, it is doing nothing more than confessing its own incompetence. Moreover, now that the left has dropped its preconditions, there is no reason why power-sharing should be the agenda—or even be on it.

The irony is that perhaps the only reason the left stays unified is our unwillingness to talk to them. Rather than fearing negotiations, we should welcome them as the best, and perhaps the only, way to move El Salvador from civil war toward credible elections, to divide the left between those civilians who believe in democracy and those guerrillas who don't, to discipline the excesses of both the security forces and the guerrillas, and to mend fences with Mexico and our European allies on this issue.

HOW CAN NEGOTIATIONS produce these outcomes? We are fortunate that the nominal head of the left is a Social Democrat, Guillermo Ungo, and of the government a Christian Democrat, Duarte. Potential international sponsors (or guarantors) of the left could be Mexico, France, the Social Democratic parties of Germany, Spain, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. The sponsors of the government could be the governments of Venezuela, the U.S., and perhaps Costa Rica. We should exploit the fact that our friends —not Cuba or the Soviet Union—could serve as international sponsors of the left and could assert tutelary responsibility over the guerrillas, as we seek to do with the security forces. Such an alignment would strengthen moderates like Duarte and Ungo.

The Administration should embrace Mexican President José Lopez Portillo's peace proposal of February 21 and use it as a means for bringing all sides to the bargaining table. Lopez Portillo thinks there is room for compromise between those who argue for elections without negotiations and those who argue for negotia-

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tions without elections—and there is.

Negotiations could begin by seeking to build trust and confidence: ceasefires should be declared in certain areas and enforced by international peacekeeping forces, representing the international sponsors. The areas in the ceasefire zone should be gradually expanded. The second subject for negotiations should be the conditions necessary to guarantee a free and fair election. Given the current violence—for which the guerrillas share the responsibility—it is understandable, if not justified, that the democratic left is boycotting the March 28 elections. (Indeed, the Christian Democrats may be making an irrevocable mistake by participating in that election. Though it may not be the first time the right steals an election from them, it could well be the last.)

The left will insist on restructuring the armed forces to eliminate the repression. But that is equally in the U.S. interest. The Salvadoran government, however, should obtain, as a quid pro quo, an agreement from the left (or some portion of it) to participate in an electoral process and to disband at least one of its more atrocity-prone guerrilla groups.

ONCE NEGOTIATIONS become meaningful, if not before, the left will almost certainly split, and the military may do so as well. Indeed, some of the guerrilla leadership is likely to try to sabotage negotiations from the beginning. In an interview with a Mexican newspaper in 1980, Cayetano Carpio, the founder of the Faribundo Martí Popular Forces for Liberation, and now the top guerrilla leader, explained why he resigned from the Communist Party a decade before: "Because of the Cuban Revolution . . . I understood that the transformation in Latin America is by the path of war. The Salvadoran Communist Party held that the path was politics and that only at the end, when the final blow was to be aimed, should arms be used." Carpio's group has since boasted of assassinating a moderate education minister, a respected foreign minister (Mauricio Borgonovo, in 1977), and the Swiss chargé; of seizing the Costa Rican, Venezuelan, and French embassies; and of numerous bombings of electric power stations and buses. Joaquin Villalobos, founder of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), in 1974 "executed" his chief rival in the ERP, Roque Dalton. Dalton's followers split to form a new guerrilla group, the FARN. The FARN's leader, Ernesto Jovel, was killed in a plane crash in mysterious circumstances in 1980, just after his group—allegedly the most barbaric—refused Castro's overtures to cooperate with the others. In an interview before his death, he held up a list of names of journalists and others whom he accused of favoring the government, and warned them that if they didn't leave the country soon, they "will be executed." Much of this sanguinary history is described in Gabriel Zaid's excellent article, "Enemy Colleagues: A Reading of the Salvadoran Tragedy," in the Winter 1982 issue of *Dissent*.

It is scarcely likely that such people will trust in a democratic framework. But if they don't, the negotiations ought to aim to constrict their power—and to encourage those who have swelled the guerrilla ranks in the last year because of repression to return home. The very fact of negotiations would begin this process. Just as important is the return to active political life of the democratic left. This can only be made possible by negotiations leading to an international authority to guarantee free, fair, and safe elections.

(3) *Limits.* What could be more self-defeating, Secretary of State Haig asked Robin McNeil on February 16, than to rule out military options? The answer to Haig's rhetorical question is the opposite of what he imagines. Haig should ask himself why it is that spokesmen for the left repeatedly invite the United States to send troops. The truth is that a U.S. combat presence would be an injection of nationalistic adrenalin for the guerrillas, making credible their assertions that they are really fighting U.S. imperialism. It would change the character of the war overnight, creating the basis for a long-term Communist-nationalist movement that could not be defeated. In any case, Congress would correctly reject it, and, under the War Powers Act, the troops would be out in ninety days. The United States would look either ignorant or impotent, depending on which end of Pennsylvania Avenue you work. By refusing to rule out military options, Haig buys only grief for himself, and gives a propaganda point to the guerrillas. To set limits on our involvement in El Salvador is in fact to enhance our capacity to influence developments there.

THE THREE-PART STRATEGY of conditionality (linking our support to genuine progress in reducing the repression), negotiations (with the left under the sponsorship of Mexico, Venezuela, and other friends), and setting limits to our involvement can succeed. That strategy would have an additional dividend. The debate in the U.S. is shaping up between those who want to stop the Communists and those who don't want to support a repressive government. The strategy outlined here can serve as a bridge between those two positions, between Congress and the executive, and between the political parties. This could also help to gain support for the Administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative.

The Administration should urge negotiations immediately—before the March 28 elections. Afterward, it could be too late. If the Christian Democrats lose, we could find ourselves tied to an indefensible regime, not a more legitimate one, and the game will be up.

But if the Administration holds to its current disastrous strategy and fails to grasp the thread of the policy emerging from Congress, the American people should know whom to blame if the left (or the extreme right) seizes power in El Salvador. It won't be Congress.

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Reach out, reach out and hush someone.

MA BELL'S BROKEN HOME

BY BOB KUTTNER

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a divorce proceeding. The husband found a friendly judge. The two agreed that the wife didn't really need her own lawyer because the husband had everybody's best interests at heart. As the negotiations proceeded, the husband awarded himself the house, the car, the savings account, and the Oriental rugs. In exchange, the wife got the children. The wife thought this rather unfair, but dared not complain, because it took two years for the divorce to become final, and, in the meantime, her husband continued to rule the family.

DRAWING BY DONALD GATES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

AT&T's settlement with the Justice Department is, among other things, a *political* masterstroke. AT&T looks as if it is making a real sacrifice. The Administration can say it hung tough. Bell's competition is generally satisfied with the breakup. And the local phone companies aren't talking.

The January 8 consent decree lets Bell keep its very profitable Long Lines department, Western Electric, Bell Labs, and a new, unregulated high-tech subsidiary that can provide sophisticated business services, data processing, and just about anything else Bell can dream up. Bell gets out from under an earlier consent decree limiting it to telephone service and requiring it to license patents to competitors. In exchange, Bell gives up its twenty-two local phone companies, which are the most capital intensive and least remunerative part of the business.

In its broad outline, this is not necessarily a bad alternative approach to breaking up Bell's monopoly. The real mischief, however, is in the fine print. Under the indulgent gaze of the Reagan Justice Department, AT&T has very shrewdly severed its wards in a manner that leaves them crippled, and arrogates to itself all of the best parts. The local companies are not likely to complain, because for the next eighteen months they will still be working for Bell.

To put the settlement in perspective, it's worth lingering for a moment on first principles. The social utility of free economic competition is, of course, that it keeps prices in check and stimulates innovation and quality. But when a company competes so well that it thoroughly dominates its market, the system breaks down, the rationale vanishes, and the company is more apt to devote its energies to protecting its monopoly than to providing a better product or service at a lower price. When that happens, government has essentially two courses available. It can decide that the monopoly is "natural" (as in the case of a public utility) and regulate it. Or the government can use antitrust litigation to let competitors, and the invisible hand, back in.

The Bell System has always straddled this divide. It is partly a regulated monopoly, partly an open competitor. But throughout its hundred-year history, Bell has tenaciously resisted competition, frequently from behind the cover of its regulated monopoly status. In *Casablanca*, Claude Rains calmly pockets his chips at the bar of Rick's Place and says, "I'm shocked—shocked!—to find there's gambling going on here." The news that big corporations sometimes play rough should be received with similar worldliness. What *is* shocking is to find that a venerable company which is supposed to have been tamed into a benign, institutionalized, regulated quasi-utility in fact behaves like the most cunning predator in the economic jungle.

The lawsuit that the Ford Administration's Justice Department filed in 1974, then, was aimed not at AT&T's size or even its market share, but at its behavior. The suit came out of a lengthy investigation which

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documented that Bell was ingeniously using the captive relationships among its manufacturing, Long Lines, and local telephone divisions to squash competitors—and to squash them in precisely those areas of the telecommunications business in which competition was possible, and in which the lack of it was causing technological stagnation. In effect, the Justice Department accused Bell of hiding behind the concept of a "natural monopoly" to create a robber baron monopoly. The 1974 suit, like a previous 1949 suit, aimed to break that captive relationship by severing Western Electric (the manufacturing arm) from the rest of Bell, and by making Bell's Long Lines division deal with the local phone companies on more of an arms-length basis.

THE SETTLEMENT, however, turns that logical remedy on its head. Local service was the one thing Bell provided efficiently; the problem was with the captive interlock, which undermined competition. Splitting off local Bell companies to restore competition fixes the one part of the system that wasn't broken —and creates a whole array of new problems. But it gets Bell out of a nasty legal thicket—and into a congenial, high-tech brier patch.

The consent decree essentially limits the local companies to basic phone service. They shall not offer data processing or any of the other "enhanced" telecommunications services that the proprietor of a local grid of wires might profitably develop. AT&T gets that business. Under the settlement, the local telephone companies can't even deal in actual telephones. All of the rented phones in customers' homes and offices become the property of the new, slimline AT&T.

Even more remarkably, AT&T managed to make off with the Yellow Pages. As an advertising source with a universal and captive market, the Yellow Pages produce profits of about a billion dollars a year, which helps pay for the white pages and keep down local subscriber costs. In Florida alone, for example, Southern Bell's annual gross classified advertising revenues are currently about $110 million, of which $70 million is profit. That's $2.50 per subscriber per month—about a quarter of what Southern Bell has been charging for basic service. Like the wife of the fable, the local companies get to keep the white pages—which are all cost and no revenue.

The damage to the viability of the local phone companies has a more subtle dimension. Local telephone companies are regulated by state public utility commissions, and profits are based on two factors: the permissible rate of return—say, 10 percent—and the "rate base" on which it is calculated. In the past, Bell's game has been to inflate the rate base. You don't have to be a public utility economist to appreciate that 10 percent of a $2-billion base is more than 10 percent of $1 billion. This tactic is so lucrative that AT&T, almost uniquely among large American companies, systematically *under*-depreciates its capital equipment. While other companies perennially lobby for faster depreciation formulas (to maximize the tax write-offs), Bell's interest has been to depreciate its capital as slowly as possible. The higher rate bases more than make up for the lost tax breaks. Under the consent decree, Bell *mère* carries off a good deal of the capital—and hence the rate base—that currently belongs to Bell *fils*. All the phones, all the customer switchboards, and any local phone company hardware that can be claimed as long-distance equipment revert to AT&T.

With their capital bases sharply reduced, the operating companies will be obligated to demand higher rates of return to keep up their revenue. Their borrowing costs will almost surely rise. They will enjoy less of a capital subsidy from the Bell System. And they will be shut out of profitable sidelines; their only product will be a dial tone. The result is likely to be more expensive, less technically up-to-date phone service for the average low-tech customer.

Logically, there was no reason why the local phone companies had to be severed in a fashion that deprives them of capital, markets, and business opportunities. This gerrymandering of local phone service was Bell's idea, and the genius of it is the way nobody complains. For just one revealing, chaotic day, several local Bell executives who had obviously been kept in the dark about the deal blurted out that local consumer phone rates would probably double or triple. Touchingly, they must have thought Bell was being taken to the cleaners by the Justice Department.

That inadvertent spasm of candor lasted only until the local execs were shushed by the home office. By day two, nobody was publicly predicting massive local rate hikes. Instead, each of Bell's twenty-two operating companies issued soothing, coordinated press releases predicting a great future for the newly orphaned local companies.

BELL'S PERSONNEL SYSTEM is instructive here. An executive works his way up the ladder by alternating tours of duty in different Bell affiliates and at national AT&T headquarters in New York. Bell's current chairman, Charles Brown, went from Hartford, to New York, to Birmingham, to Atlanta, to Philadelphia, to Cincinnati, to Kansas City, to Cooperstown, back to Cincinnati, to Atlanta, to Chicago (where he became president of Illinois Bell), and finally to a succession of top-level jobs at AT&T's corporate headquarters in New York.

Suppose you are an ambitious executive vice-president of a local Bell company, with watchful mentors in New York. Suddenly Bell is being split into one hot, high-tech company (post-divorce, it will be the country's second-largest corporation, after General Motors) —and a passel of rather ragged, slow-growth local public utilities. Which place do you hope you'll end up? Now try to imagine yourself indignantly dissent-

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ing from the whole deal for the sake of good old Podunk Bell. Judge Harold H. Greene of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., who is presiding over the consent decree, has left the record open for sixty days to receive comment. A good many people have availed themselves of the opportunity to challenge specific provisions, but none of them are presidents of Bell affiliates. Representative Tim Wirth, Democrat of Colorado, chairman of the House telecommunications subcommittee, plans to resume hearings March 10 on the structure of AT&T. He is beating the bushes for dissident local Bell officials.

About the only group to have spoken up against major aspects of the deal is the state public utility commissioners. They are fairly toothless, but they are no fools. When local phone rates head skyward, the public utility commissioners will take the heat. A number of them are quite able, but collectively they are a poor match for the combined interests of Bell and its competitors.

AS NOTED, the other especially shrewd part of Bell's bargain is the way it deals its strongest competitors into the game.

By the 1960s, technology was beginning to nibble around the edges of Bell's exclusive domain. Rival companies were making telephone hardware, inventing esoteric technologies to connect telephone customers by satellite and microwave, and invading Bell's own wires with high-tech data services. An earlier (1956) consent decree limited Bell to the telephone business, but, bit by bit, as technology blurred the boundaries between telecommunications and other businesses, the Federal Communications Commission began letting competitors in. AT&T's Charles Brown called it a "fence with a one-way hole"—a hole that Bell devoted its considerable resources to plugging.

Consider, for example, the David and Goliath battle between Bell and the MCI Telecommunications Corporation, now Bell's leading long-distance competitor. (MCI has 2 percent of the total market to Bell's 97 percent.) MCI's president, William McGowan, a 54-year-old chemical engineer with a Harvard MBA and a knack for entrepreneurship, calculated in the mid-1960s that ordinary long-distance phone calls could be transmitted by microwave radio at a fraction of AT&T's toll rates. He bought out a fledgling microwave company, hired some experts, and asked the FCC to approve service on one trial route, between Chicago and St. Louis. It was the first attempt to compete with Bell's long distance service in sixty years.

Bell immediately recognized the danger posed by microwave competitors. As long as coaxial cables were the only way to connect long-distance callers, Bell's monopoly remained secure. Nobody was about to rewire the entire county. But microwave is another story entirely. It's cheap and democratic. If the FCC approves, anybody can play. All it takes is access to telephone customers—through Bell's local switchboards.

Bell's first line of defense was to try to get the FCC itself to freeze MCI out entirely. Bell warned the commission that competition would "skim the cream" from its most profitable routes, in turn raising toll rates elsewhere. (This, by the way, has proved to be self-serving nonsense. When it came, long-distance competition pushed rates down by forcing Bell to compete more efficiently. Even on routes that are still exclusively Bell's, rates have come down because of the technological innovations competition has spurred.)

DISCOUNTING AT&T'S objections, the FCC, in a major shift in policy, announced in 1971 that MCI—and anybody else—could offer long-distance service. Armed with this ruling, McGowan turned to Wall Street. In less than a year he raised $110 million, a record sum for a new venture. McGowan's plan was straightforward. His start-up capital would build microwave circuits and transmitters. As revenues came in from his first routes, his capital would be rolled over to build a coast-to-coast microwave system by 1975.

At first, MCI bypassed Bell altogether. Local MCI lines connected customers to MCI's own switchboards and transmitters. But this was cumbersome and inefficient. It was obvious that MCI needed interconnections with local phone companies, so that MCI customers could dial up the service on their ordinary phones.

Under pressure from a pro-competition FCC, Bell did initially give MCI very limited interconnections. Then, in late 1972, MCI sat down with Bell to negotiate the logistics of a more acceptable national interconnection agreement, in line with the FCC's new policy.

As subsequent antitrust testimony showed, Bell's strategy was to run MCI through a series of mazes. If interconnection couldn't be stalled legally, perhaps it could be stalled technically. If not technically, then perhaps financially. If not financially, then maybe legally again. The longer Bell could withhold satisfactory interconnection, the longer MCI would be denied customer income. This in turn would force MCI to live off capital and to slow down further its construction and marketing plans. Like so many other failed competitors, MCI could be starved in the cradle.

According to voluminous sworn testimony, Bell essentially pulled what negotiators called a "slow roll." As soon as MCI seemed ready to accept a Bell demand, Bell withdrew it. While MCI executives were naively bargaining in good faith for their interconnections, Bell was quietly forum-shopping. Though long-distance interconnection was plainly an FCC matter, Bell quietly prepared to file separate plans with the fifty state commissions. At one point, Bell abruptly decided to challenge the FCC's jurisdiction in court, and literally pulled the plug on MCI's customers. AT&T even forced MCI technicians reporting trouble on trunk connections to dial 611—as if this multimillion-dollar competitor was a household subscriber.

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By 1976, after nearly five years of runarounds, court rulings had established MCI's right to interconnections. Bell, however, still had ample latitude for technological mischief. To this day MCI and other competing long-distance services often sound as if the caller is speaking from inside a sewer. That's not because MCI's transmitters are inferior to Bell's. It's mainly because Bell will give MCI only two-wire connections, while Bell's own Long Lines department gets four wires. As an added inconvenience, MCI customers still have to dial a twelve-digit access code before dialing the area code and the local number. And person-to-person calls aren't possible because Bell won't let its operators service MCI customers. The reduced technical quality and the inconvenience of dialing twenty-two digits help offset MCI's price advantage, which currently averages about 35 percent. (MCI argues that there is no technological justification for all this, and has gone to court about it. Its point was nicely proven last year when non-Bell local phone companies in Iowa and Texas gave MCI everything Bell is denying—four-wire connections, single-digit access, and operator service.)

Besides interfering with MCI's interconnections, Bell has tried to fiddle selectively with its own pricing. In 1972, as MCI was attempting to expand its service, Bell sharply cut some of its rates, primarily on MCI's routes, and raised others. This maneuver was thrown out by the FCC. Bell is currently asking the FCC to permit it to triple the fees it charges MCI and the other long-distance competitors for access to its switchboards. This, if approved, would obliterate MCI's price advantage.

In 1980, MCI won a record private antitrust suit against Bell. A federal jury in Chicago heard the evidence of repeated chicanery, added up the cost of MCI's lost business, provided for treble damages, and awarded MCI a cool $1.8 billion. The case is now on appeal before the Seventh Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The MCI story is unique only in the size of the damage award. Bell has resorted to similarly overbearing tactics to keep control of the lucrative telephone manufacturing business, and to keep competing data services at bay until it could develop its own.

PROBABLY THE MOST LUCRATIVE aspect of the old Bell system is the captive relationship between local phone companies and Western Electric. Traditionally, individual subscribers, businesses, and the local phone company itself all were forced to buy their equipment from Western. This had major benefits. Western, as a pure monopoly, could inflate its prices more or less at will. Thus Bell could shift profits "upstream"—and away from parts of the corporation subject to regulation. At the same time, research costs for developing and building the equipment could be loaded onto the local and long-distance rate base. Not surprisingly, in most years, the profits of the Bell System as a whole exceed the limits for each of its component parts set by local and federal regulators. The difference is mainly the unregulated super-profits of Western Electric. (Western does some defense work, but most of its business is within the Bell System.) Competition in the equipment business wrecks the whole system. It means that Western Electric has to market products like anybody else and compete on the basis of quality and price.

IN THE EARLY 1960s, a man named Thomas Carter invented a little gizmo that permitted a trucker to communicate with ordinary telephones via his two-way radio. The trucker radioed the dispatcher, the dispatcher patched the call into the switchboard, using a "Carterfone," and the trucker could call anybody. Or anybody could call him. Then, as now, Bell strenuously resisted the attachment of what it calls "foreign" (non-Bell) equipment to its lines. But in 1968, the FCC's *Carterfone* decision held that Bell could not prevent customers from attaching non-Bell equipment to their lines, as long as it was technically compatible.

Like the MCI ruling, this was a serious blow, but Bell was far from ready to give up. It immediately countered with the idea that you had to rent a "protective coupling device" from Bell if you wanted to attach any non-Bell equipment to your phone line. This had three advantages. First, only Bell could provide the device. Second, Bell took a long time making the devices available while it hastened to catch up with competitors' products. Third, the rental fee cost the competition business—as did the subtle suggestion that non-Bell equipment was somehow unsafe. Bell required no such device for its own products.

In cases where Bell did not manufacture a particular item, say an answering machine, it would sometimes buy the item from a supplier and make it available through its own outlets. If you got the answering machine from Bell, no protective coupling device was required; but if you bought the identical answering machine from someone else, you had to rent the device from Bell. This tended to undermine Bell's argument that coupling devices were essential to protect the system from damage.

After this maneuver was overturned, Bell asked that telephone products be submitted to a rigid certification procedure—a more reasonable idea. But as soon as the FCC agreed, Bell asked that the certification program be amended to excuse Bell's own products from being subject to the red tape. Only after several years of such delaying tactics could competing phone equipment be marketed without harassment of one kind or another from Bell.

Fourteen years after *Carterfone*, competing suppliers have made heavy inroads into the market for business telephone equipment. Bell today has only about one-third of the new business. Companies like Rolm, ITT, and General Telephone are faster on their feet, and

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many businesses prefer their products. Bell still dominates home telephones, however. To match the competition, Bell has developed a retail business selling Mickey Mouse phones, imitation antique phones, and other upscale specialty items. But if you ask the clerk in a Bell telephone store whether by any chance he has a plain black phone in a plain brown wrapper under the counter, you will be told there is none to be had. Regular telephone receivers, as far as Bell is concerned, are strictly for rent.

It takes some persistence for an individual subscriber to figure out that there is money to be saved by buying one's own phones. Most Bell companies are cagey about letting the customer know how much of the monthly bill is for rental of the phones and how much is for access to the system. The two are generally lumped together in the basic monthly charge. Take my own phone bill as an example. In our house there are two lines and four phones, for which New England Tel charges us $53.55 a month. Our monthly bill doesn't tell us how much is for the lines and how much for the phones. But on request I found out that only $27.05 of the basic charge is for the two lines. The remaining $26.50 is for phone rental.

Buying a comparable set of phones from a Bell competitor costs $299.85. So in less than a year we could save enough in rental fees to own the phones outright, and then save over $300 a year indefinitely. (With Bell's phones, of course, the cost of repair service is covered by the rental fee. But most repairs involve the line, not the receiver. A receiver will function perfectly, on the average, for seventeen years.)

One more example, to give the flavor of the pattern AT&T follows in trying to obliterate its rivals. In 1974, a small, feisty company called Datran launched a digital data transmission service. Bell had decided against offering a similar service. After Datran's plans were announced, Bell undertook a crash program to match

How She Got That Way

Most well-informed Americans take it for granted that Bell's monopoly is either the natural result of technology or the deliberate, perhaps misguided, result of federal regulation. Neither happens to be the case. There is no technological reason whatever why most aspects of the telecommunications business need be a monopoly.

Bell was monopolizing phone service long before there was an FCC. Almost from the moment Alexander Graham Bell rang up Mr. Watson, Bell has resorted to a variety of shenanigans to keep out competitors. The tactics used by Bell in the 1960s and 1970s to undermine microwave carriers, data processors, and equipment manufacturers are only embellishments on the methods Bell employed around the turn of the century.

After 1894, when Alexander Graham Bell's original patents expired, an independent telephone industry proliferated. Rival companies invented superior technology, and competed with Bell companies for local franchises to wire up towns. By 1904 independent companies had almost as many local subscribers as Bell—and were gaining fast.

In those days, Bell's tactics were the stuff of legend in antitrust texts. They included taking steep losses to hose away competition. Once a demolished rival was forced to sell out, Bell occasionally held a public burning of the rival's telephones. As in the MCI episode three-quarters of a century later, Bell refused to connect rival phone companies to its system. If you subscribed to a competing phone company, you couldn't reach anybody in the Bell System. Bell's banker, the house of Morgan, starved competitors for credit. Bell refused to sell competitors telephones, and insisted that its own affiliates buy only from Western Electric. It also got rid of rivals by buying them out, often through anonymous fronts.

Bell even attempted to monopolize the then-substantial telegraph business. For the Justice Department, newly armed with the Sherman and Clayton acts, the last straw was Bell's surprise acquisition of Western Union. The department, under the Wilson Administration, began making antitrust noises. Bell's response, characteristically, was to settle out of court and to get the best of the deal. In an historic letter to the Attorney General, a Bell vice president named Nathan C. Kingsbury pledged to get Bell out of the telegraph business, to let rival companies interconnect with its grid, and to stop buying out local competitors.

In regulatory lore, this letter is known as the "Kingsbury Commitment," a phrase which sounds, appropriately enough, like a diplomatic covenant between two sovereign powers. Like the present consent decree, the Kingsbury Commitment was hailed as a great sacrifice for Bell and a splendid victory for the public. But (and there may be a lesson here) by the early 1920s, Bell had effectively squashed most of the competition and was back in control of more than 80 percent of the nation's telephone service. Long distance was a Bell monopoly, and competing manufacturers were closed out of Bell's markets. This remarkable history is documented in Joseph Goulden's superb 1968 classic, *Monopoly*, now unfortunately out of print.

In the late 1930s, the newborn FCC conducted a major investigation which indicated that these tactics were continuing. World War II intervened, but in 1949 the Justice Department made use of the FCC investigation and filed a major suit seeking to split off Western Electric from AT&T. The suit was much like the 1974 one; and, like the 1974 suit, it was settled by a friendly Administration. A 1956 consent decree left the Bell System totally intact, requiring only that Bell stick to the telephone business and license technology to competitors.

That settlement staved off changes for yet another generation.

B.K.

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it. Long before Bell's service was actually available, Bell filed rates with the FCC undercutting Datran's and mounted a publicity blitz, scaring away Datran's customers and backers. The FCC later found that Bell's rates were priced well below its costs. Two hearing examiners termed the rates "predatory," and the FCC itself held them to be anticompetitive in violation of FCC policy. Much later, Bell had to pay Datran $50 million in damages. But by then Bell's tactics had worked. Datran was out of business, and the money went to satisfy creditors. Bell's first instinct, it seems, is simply to stop a competitor from competing. Once that is done, Bell is content to pay whatever damages are necessary to clean up the mess.

GIVEN THIS HISTORY, the benefit of the Justice Department's settlement is that it does, after all, sever the basic tie that makes such misdeeds so tempting. No longer will there be a captive relationship between phone customers, local phone companies, Long Lines, and Western Electric. No longer will the FCC have to crack heads to force the local phone companies to shop around for the switching and other big-ticket equipment they now buy from Bell's Western Electric. It will be in their rational self-interest to do so. For individuals, telephone service will be just like electrical service. The local phone company will wire up your house, and you will get your phones, just as you get your light bulbs, from somebody else.

But the settlement leaves open two very serious questions. To what degree can Bell still use its immense market power to undermine its competition? And how well will local phone companies fare, given the strictures put on their operations, by Bell's settlement with the Justice Department?

The Justice Department's role in this affair was peculiar. The department, in this case, was Assistant Attorney General William Baxter, the head of the Antitrust Division. (Attorney General William French Smith, who used to be a director of Pacific Tel, and Deputy Attorney General Ed Schmults, formerly a Bell pension fund adviser, had to disqualify themselves.) Baxter provided an exquisite rationale for the gerrymandering of the local telephone business. In his view, the settlement is designed to slice the telephone business into two distinct realms—an unregulated "competitive" sector, and a regulated "natural monopoly" sector. This rationalizes all the things AT&T grabbed from the local phone companies.

The Yellow Pages, for example, are defined as within the competitive sector. Therefore the local phone companies, as regulated natural monopolies, can't have them. What makes the Yellow Pages competitive? As Baxter explained it to the House Judiciary Committee, anybody can go into the business of publishing local directories. The computerized listings of local business telephone numbers and addresses will remain in the hands of the local telephone companies, which can auction them off to the highest bidder or sell them to whomever they like. This, Baxter explained, will "recapture" any excess profits from AT&T. Maybe so. But in practice, force of habit is likely to give the Yellow Pages (AT&T gets exclusive rights to that name) a huge leg up on the competition. Whatever the local companies do with their listings, AT&T seems confident that it can find ways of assembling listings and cornering the classified directory business.

Baxter also insists that the long distance business is now fully competitive, despite the fact that AT&T still has 97 percent of the market. The annual increase in Bell's long-distance revenues is greater than the total revenues of all its competitors combined. Though Bell's share is dropping—very slowly—it will dominate the long-distance business for years to come.

Odder still is the rationale Baxter offers for the strictures the settlement puts on the local phone companies. He views local phone service as a natural monopoly—and so it has been in the past. But in the future, the technological basis for that natural monopoly will erode, just as surely as it is eroding in the long-distance business. In twenty years' time, wires will be far less important. Large enterprises such as New York's Citibank already have their own internal phone systems, relying partially on radio. As "cellular radio" technology becomes more sophisticated, an updated version of the Dick Tracy two-way wrist radio could make it possible for everyone to carry around a compact, wireless telephone.

As technologies like these expand, multiple competitors (including Bell itself) will move in on the basic markets of local phone companies. The settlement doesn't get rid of Charley Brown's "fence with a one-way hole." It merely removes it from Bell—and inflicts it on your local phone company.

IT IS FAIRLY CLEAR that Bell got the better of the Justice Department. What is not clear is whether William Baxter knew what he was doing. At the time the settlement was reached, he was in Utah on an extended ski vacation. During his Senate testimony last month explaining the settlement, more than one Senator wondered why the most important antitrust settlement in decades didn't justify cutting short a vacation.

It is also worth inquiring why Baxter chose to settle at all. In his 73-page opinion last September 11, throwing out Bell's motion to dismiss the case, Judge Greene left little doubt about which way he would rule on the case itself. His opinion recounted one unrefuted nasty episode after another. It seems clear that the judge found the evidence against Bell convincing—and it was only after that September 11 opinion that Bell began actively exploring a settlement.

"Any lawyer likes to settle a case," observes Kenneth Cox, a former FCC commissioner who is now a vice president of MCI. "But you're not supposed to give

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away the store when you're winning." Whether Baxter really gave away the store will depend in part on what Judge Greene is able to salvage as the case progresses. The legal situation right now leaves Bell holding most of the cards.

Under a 1974 statute called the Tunney Act, which was designed to prevent sweetheart settlements, the record in a settlement like this one is left open for public comment for sixty days. The judge then decides whether to accept the settlement. At first, AT&T and Justice tried to circumvent the Tunney Act altogether. They sought to move the case to another judge, arguing that this settlement was only a modification of the 1956 settlement. But even though Judge Greene insisted that the Tunney Act does apply and that he keep the case, other interested parties are neatly kept out—because, as Bell has orchestrated the deal, the consent decree itself contains only the settlement's broad outlines. The really sticky issues are left to be negotiated by AT&T and the Justice Department *after* the decree has been entered. It is not at all clear whether, at that point, Judge Greene will retain effective jurisdiction to demand changes. And, of course, Bell will still be negotiating with itself.

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has asked Judge Greene to change that procedure and order that all the fine print be submitted and comments taken before the decree is accepted. Other observers, including the respected former general counsel of the FCC, Henry Geller, have suggested that the judge arrange for the local Bell companies to have separate legal representation in the proceedings, the way a court would appoint counsel to look out for the interests of an orphan. And several consumer groups have asked the judge to appoint an expert to look out for the interests of consumers. The Tunney Act was written for precisely this kind of situation, and the judge had latitude to do all these things.

EVEN WITH THESE procedures, however, the judge's leverage remains limited. He can, in effect, suggest modifications before entering the order, but he can't really rewrite it himself. As a last resort he can throw the settlement out—but then there would be nothing to keep the Justice Department from dropping the entire case.

Among the sticky issues still to be decided are these:

How will the various assets to be divided between AT&T and the local phone companies be valued? (It is safe to say that AT&T will be looking out for its own interests, and not those of the local companies.)

Which, if any, of the new high-tech services will local phone companies be permitted to offer under Baxter's notion of a regulated natural monopoly?

What about non-Bell local phone companies? The consent decree doesn't restrict their right to engage in high-tech businesses. In California, where GTE has part of the state and Bell the rest, is it fair to let GTE compete in areas closed to Pacific Tel? There are convincing arguments that instead of being frozen out forever, the newly independent local phone companies should be allowed to go into the high-tech areas after a limited period, say three years.

Which technologies will Bell take away from the local companies? Which ones will they license back? The settlement lifts the requirement that Bell license its patents to competitors, and local phone companies are now competitors. Is this really fair, since ratepayers have subsidized the development of the technology?

Most fundamentally, how, if at all, can the judge assure that local telephone service will continue to be well run and reasonably priced?

THESE ISSUES will take months to thrash out. Meanwhile, Congress continues to gear up to rewrite the Communications Act of 1934, which has been rendered largely obsolete by technological changes. Last year the Republican Senate passed a modest bill barring AT&T from entering certain fields, such as electronic advertising and cable television. A much tougher House bill, sponsored by Representative Wirth, would fundamentally alter telecommunications regulation to encourage competition and also to safeguard local phone service. The settlement makes the Wirth bill more important than ever. But this year the Senate is unlikely to act at all, and, unless public recognition that local phone rates may increase sharply leads to overwhelming political pressure, neither is the House.

The courts' problem is that a judge can't legislate complex regulatory issues, least of all when the contending parties want to settle. At this point, Judge Greene's only real leverage for a more equitable division of turf between Bell and the local phone companies is Bell's enthusiasm for the settlement. If the deal were to collapse, Bell would again be stuck with the annoying restrictions of the 1956 decree, the risk of renewed litigation, and the eventual prospect of Congressional action far less favorable to its interests.

The long, operatic saga of Ma Bell, her orphans, and her rivals yields an unexpected insight into the relationship between government regulation and economic competition. Nowadays, both liberals and conservatives hold regulation to be antithetical to competition. In this long episode, however, regulation has been competition's paladin. Without regulation—without the FCC's pro-competitive stance, without the availability of regulatory forums in which competitors could press their complaints, without the successive antitrust suits—AT&T would have succeeded in strangling all its rivals. For all its pro-Bell features, the latest settlement does open the way to real competition in telecommunications. But a settlement along the lines of the Justice Department's original suit would have served the public interest far more.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Long Farewell, Quick Goodbyes

Takashi Shimura died in Tokyo on February 11, just one month before his 77th birthday. He had long been ill. His acting career had begun in the theater, then he had moved into films and had played in many, including most of Akira Kurosawa's, beginning with that director's debut in 1943. Shimura is doubtless best known in the U.S. for three Kurosawa roles: the woodcutter in *Rashomon*, the leader of the samurai in *The Seven Samurai*, and the civil servant doomed by cancer in *Ikiru*. Just to remember those performances is once again to feel tingles between the shoulder blades.

TAKASHI SHIMURA IN 'IKIRU'
JAPAN SOCIETY FILM CENTER

Last winter Kurosawa announced at a press luncheon in New York that he plans to make a version of *King Lear*, and I asked him whether Shimura would be in it. He replied that there was a large part for Shimura but that the actor was hospitalized and the prognosis was not good. The film will be made, I hope, but one role in it, however well played, will not be played as well as it might have been.

If we feel that we "know" Chekhov and Mark Twain and Rembrandt and Haydn—to name some of the artists who have the peculiar power to evoke a sense of personal acquaintance—it's not surprising that we should have that feeling about some film actors, since their physical beings are the medium of their art. Once in Zagreb a Yugoslavian director told me that his brother and Gary Cooper had died in the same week; he hadn't seen his brother in twenty years and Cooper's death had affected him much more. But Cooper was a star, a real star, who was sometimes a good actor. Shimura was never a star and was always a wonderful actor.

It's tempting to get abstract about universality and immortality when talking about film artists, but I can't think of a better reason to yield to that temptation than the occasion of Shimura's death. Three times I sent greetings to him through men I met in New York: his colleague Toshiro Mifune in 1969, the great cinematographer Kazuo Miyagawa about a year ago, and Kurosawa a few months ago. I don't know whether he got the greeting, and if he did, I can't imagine that it meant much to him: I'm talking about what it meant to me. I felt an urge, an ache, to reach around the globe to someone I *knew* and had never met. My perceptions of myself and my life have been in some degree touched because Shimura lived and worked, and the sending of a greeting was a confirmation of that strange, commonplace truth.

Film is supposed to be permanent. It isn't. It's supposed to be universally available. It isn't. When it *is* preserved and available, it often isn't even "textually" correct: snips and muddiness make us groan. But if there is anything at all to the ideal of film preservation and continuance, then there are people to come—some, at least, in many parts of the world—who will be affected by the humanity of the human being who died in Tokyo last month.

From the sublime to the varyingly ridiculous:

One From The Heart. Francis Coppola boasts at the end of this Las Vegas story that it was all shot in his Zoetrope Studios. Does he think that anyone could have believed otherwise? Every foot of the film is—deliberately and sometimes not—artificial, tricked up, and cosmeticized. When he isn't delighting in tired novelties, like fading in a new scene in one portion of the frame before the current scene is finished, he is using tired tiredness like rising crane shots above a crowded street. *All* the time he is telling us the tedious story of an ostentatiously ordinary couple—he's an auto mechanic, she's a travel agent, both eking out a living amidst Vegas luxury—with songs pumping away on the sound track to convey that we're seeing a musical when in fact we aren't. Nothing about this film is worth further comment except Coppola's belief that he could freshen this flimsy, familiar script by investing it with movie magic all the way. The well-published saga of his efforts to pay for this picture is

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Arthur. John Gielgud, for whose too-brief appearances I endure *Brideshead Revisited*, walks off with this comedy as a pungent, pained manservant.

The French Lieutenant's Woman. Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons excel in this double-stranded sententious script about Victorian lovers and the modern actors who play them.

My Dinner With André. Table-talk of André Gregory, an avant-garde director, and Wallace Shawn, a playwright, that goes far beyond the theater. No revelations of wisdom, just the pleasure of continuous interest.

Reds. This politics-as-romance story of John Reed and Louise Bryant overcomes its sentimental bumps with sheer narrative vigor and good performances.

SK

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marginally more interesting than the picture itself and much more bitter. He had similar troubles with *Apocalypse Now*, but the result at least showed occasional flashes of why he thought it was worth the struggle. Not here. The story of Coppola so far is the story of a man with some talent who fought his way to a place of power and now has less to use it for than when he was fighting to get it. Now he is emperor of his vacuities. Pro tem emperor. And, I hope, pro tem vacuities.

Love And Money. James Toback, author of such pretentious dreck as *The Gambler* and *Fingers* and director of the latter, had the germ of an idea here; but the germ became an infection. An internationally powerful tycoon wants to persuade the new president of a Latin American country not to interfere with the tycoon's silver mine in that country. Tycoon, located in Los Angeles, learns that a minor official in a local bank was a Harvard classmate of the new president. Tycoon offers bank schnook a million to go down for one weekend and bring his old Harvard pal around to tycoon's side. From there on, it's all malarkey, expressed in dialogue of painful "freshness."

The tycoon is played by Klaus Kinski, who seems to be following the Peter Lorre downward path from actor to merchandiser and now even sounds like Lorre. He has a gorgeous young wife, Ornella Muti, who is losing her sex appeal (which is about all she has) by selling it so blatantly; and the tycoon uses his wife to lure the reluctant young banker into the scheme. The young man is Ray Sharkey who looks like a pensive goldfish, but we're supposed to believe that Muti falls so desperately in love with him that she leaves her life of fabulous luxe to join him in poverty. This ending is credible, not in terms of personal appeal but only in terms of radical American puritanism. Wealth still fades before love, no matter how hip you are.

Two points of interest. The late King Vidor, an outstanding director, plays Sharkey's grandfather at the age of 89, has the only good lines in the script, and makes the most of them. Armand Assante, handsome and strong, is good as the Latin president. Recently Assante appeared on Broadway in a historical turkey called *Kingdoms* in which he played Napoleon, and showed himself surprisingly skilled in an old-fashioned style of acting—*not* hamming—which was the only way the role could possibly have been handled and which I wouldn't have expected a young actor to know so well. Here he plays in a quite different style, of course, but is equally assured and attractive.

Quest For Fire. A very expensive, utterly childish, sometimes unintentionally comic epic. Jean-Jacques Annaud, who made the madly overpraised *Black And White In Color,* directed this adaptation of a turn-of-the-century French novel about the Ice Age. A tribe loses its one scrap of fire, which presumably it got from lightning, and sends out an expedition to recapture it. The expedition finds another tribe that actually knows how to make fire, by twirling a stick until tinder begins to smoke. This advanced tribe knows other things, too—the missionary position for sex, for instance, as against the animal position. Consider that all these people are dressed in scraps of furs, are mostly simian in appearance, and speak mostly in grunts and odd syllables; imagine then the scene in which a girl of the advanced tribe, copulating with one of the dullard tribe, breaks from the only position he knows to initiate him in the new way—to his grunted irritation, puzzlement, surprise, then delight—and you may understand why I almost fell off my chair laughing.

I see that I'm undervaluing the sounds that these ancestors of ours make. The credits tell us that the film's special languages were created by Anthony Burgess, ubiquitous and indefatigable as ever.

Ceremonies of mystery.

On Catholicism

By Czeslaw Milosz

Raised in the Catholic religion, I am not indifferent to the remarkable successes of American Catholicism; I read its press, I take sides with certain of its well-known figures against certain others, and I am even perhaps a good parishioner. Or maybe not. The division of people into believers and nonbelievers has always made me somewhat uneasy because it assumes a qualitative leap, a different substance for the "believer" and the "nonbeliever." I suspect, a few exceptions aside, that we are dealing here with a decision, a will to belief or disbelief, resting on considerations which, relative to the heart of the matter, are rather secondary, and also that the imagination of those who attend mass every Sunday is no different from that of those who never set foot inside a church. I would even push this further—the difficulty that the imagination must overcome to return heat and life to religious symbols may itself be a significant factor in the triumphs of Catholicism, which does not favor private meditations, and which demands, or has until now, obedience above all. Catholicism is safer; the decision to be Catholic does not properly concern one's faith but the submission to or the revolt against authority. Responsibility has been shifted and the faithful comply. They kneel, rise, kneel again, sing, take communion, and all this is done ceremonially, in a state of detachment.

There is the warm, human presence of a God who took on flesh in order to experience our hunger and our pain, so we would not be doomed to strain our eyes upward but could be nourished by words spoken by lips like our own. And the God-man is not one of us in our moments of pride and glory but one of us in misfortune, in slavery, and in the fear of death. The hour when he agreed to accept suffering conquers time; centuries of change and passing civilizations are insignificant and short-lived, and no wasteland of cement, glass, and

Czeslaw Milosz won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980. This essay is excerpted from *Visions From San Francisco Bay* by Czeslaw Milosz, to be published this spring. English translation copyright ©1982 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Translated from the Polish by Richard Lourie.

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metal will make man different from those men Christ addressed in Galilee. He still has the right to proclaim: "I am love." There is the son and beside him the Mother, the eternal mother, forever grieving over her child's suffering, the protectress, the intercessor. Thus, in the imagination, the dogma of the Trinity imperceptibly flows into another, unformulated dogma, the Trinity of the Father, Mother, and Son. The radiance of that Trinity confirms the community of the living and the dead, the communion of saints, dialogue, and intercession. In this way a purely human space—filled with the rays which dart from eye to eye, from hand to hand, and with voices in prayer and supplication—is constructed alongside physical space. All humanity, past and present, is, in truth, a Church persisting outside ordinary space and time, a Church opposed to the necessity built into the universe. Catholicism is the most anthropocentric of religions and, in some sense, through its own excess of divine humanity, it resists the exact sciences which annihilate the individual. Thus, paradoxically, it is less susceptible than other religions to the disintegrative influence of science and technology. In Catholicism, even Heaven and Earth, the Descent and the Ascension of God are not like relations between worlds but like those between human forms.

AT THE SAME TIME, however, since the Catholic catechism, a fortress built on a crag, cannot be chipped away, what constitutes its strength is also its weakness. The mind receives advance warning that it should not venture outside the walls of the dogmas and the mysteries of faith, and should bow humbly to things which it does not cease to find absurd even when it denies its own nature. There is merit to that interdiction because Catholicism signifies a participation in a feast, the partaking of bread transformed into the actual body of Christ. A mind infected with rationalism trying to explain how a little flour and water could also be the body of God led Zwingli to the proposition that Christ's presence in the wafer was purely symbolic. For Protestantism that was the beginning of the decline of faith in the Eucharist, that is, the beginning of the end of the sacral feast. But how many Catholics, when receiving communion, fail to overcome their own doubts and resort to a symbolic interpretation, since their minds can neither surmount nor avoid the obstacle?

Not taking part in Sunday mass is a mortal sin and before receiving the Eucharist one must be absolved of that and other mortal sins through confession. But the faithful cannot grasp the meaning of Original Sin, which is reduced to the breaking of a taboo by the catechism, nor can they grasp the meaning of sin in general. Sin is now being broken down into clusters of psychological and sociological determinants; it is being universalized, changed into a sense of undifferentiated guilt, and it seems pointless to whisper one's transgressions against a set of numbered regulations through the confessional's grille. The psychoanalyst's confessional has already taught us that what is hurriedly recited to the priest will not be the truth and that absolution is obtained by feigning regret, while one actually treats past transgressions as more or less inevitable.

In a moment of sincerity nearly every Catholic would no doubt admit that he is unable to unite the separate points of doctrine. Thus, for example, the Credo does not demand belief in the immortality of the soul, only belief in the resurrection of the body and life eternal; that is something completely different from the astral travel of souls liberated from skeletons and flesh. But at the same time the imagination is required to deal with the mystery of eternal punishment for the evil so deeply rooted in some people that it refers us back to yet another mystery, that of predestination and freedom, and thus the resurrection of bodies is linked with eternal physical torment.

BUT COULDN'T someone who wished to understand what he believes commit an error? That would be a fair objection had not Catholicism labored for centuries to erect a magnificent intellectual structure *around* the dogmas and had its theologians not formulated all man's problems with his own existence into syllogisms. As soon as a worshipper on his church bench does not limit himself to mindless compliance, which is in any case impossible, he encroaches on the fields tilled and cultivated by theology, which does not at all mean that he had to read any theological works. The very intellectual structure that Catholicism demands emphasizes the obstacles the contemporary mind encounters there. For this system, perfected in the thirteenth century (and still far from renewal, no matter what anyone says) belongs to another layer of civilization, another *episteme*, and that once lucid architecture is now becoming less self-evident.

The training a Catholic receives in childhood inclines him to respect mystery; life and death conceal their depths beneath layers of meaning. Mystery compels humble submission to an authority that derives its power from the will of God, but the mind wavers between resignation and the hope that there is some path that leads into the heart of the fortress. Were it not for that hope, there would be no stands with Catholic philosophical literature in paperback in the vestibules of American churches. I, however, assume that a religious man who brings home a volume of the *Summa Theologica* and sits down with it for some serious reading is making a decision not too different from the decision "to be religious." The ideas he encounters offer insurmountable resistance; they weary him. It could be said that the sleep sealing his eyes marks the line between the promise and its defeat.

TRIAGE AND JUSTICE

The Ethics of Rationing Life-Saving Medical Resources

Gerald R. Winslow

Rationing of life-saving medical resources, or triage, is practiced not only in disasters but also in the distribution of scarce new medical technologies. Winslow provides a history of how triage has been practiced in modern medicine, and describes two potential cases: emergency treatment after an earthquake and allocation of the new artificial heart.

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THE VOYAGE OF PETER'S BARK

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church
by Malachi Martin

(Putnam's, 336 pp., $14.95)

The Papacy Today
by Francis X. Murphy

(Macmillan, 256 pp., $10.95)

The Pope's Divisions
by Peter Nichols

(Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 382 pp., $16.95)

There is so far no sign of a recession in the papal book industry. Here three established authors present their latest work. They do not tread on each other's toes, for each has a different subject matter and approach. Malachi Martin's book is about the papacy from the catacombs to—I deduce—October 1980. Francis X. Murphy confines himself to the popes of this century and laid down his pen in August 1980. Peter Nichols, strictly speaking, is not writing about the papacy as such, but about the state of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world. However, as Rome correspondent for the London *Times*, he has some shrewd comments on Pope John Paul II. So the only overlap in the three books is to be found in the assessments of the present pope and the analysis of what is happening to the Church.

Martin has the most sharply defined thesis. It is contained in his title: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church*. This is not the first time that Martin has cried woe. In *Three Popes and a Cardinal*, published in 1972, he foretold: "Well before the year 2,000 there will no longer be an institution recognizable as the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church of today." It all depends on what is meant by "recognizable" and who is doing the recognizing. I mention this earlier book merely to show that Martin had already predicted what he now believes has come to pass. Naturally, he finds evidence to support his thesis. And in the intervening nine years his pessimism about the Roman Catholic Church has deepened; Peter's bark is about to sink beneath the waves.

However, Martin has a curiously roundabout approach toward demonstrating his main thesis. The book presents episodes from the lives of the popes. Give or take a rather hapless saint or two, they form an extraordinary crew of lechers, murderers, double-dealers, and power-hungry maniacs. Forty of them bribed their way to the papal throne. In comparison, twentieth century popes seem eminently respectable. Though this change makes for dullness, it is not evidence of decline. It might even be considered some sort of progress.

If we can set aside the thesis for a moment and consider the book as a narrative, there is no doubt that it contains some fine, if purplish, passages. The great set-pieces, the dramatic encounters, the catching of mood and atmosphere: all this is splendidly done. It is as if Martin were sketching out scenarios for a fifty-part television epic. Meet Sylvester and Hippolytus as they stagger around the lead mines in the year 235, manacled, each with his left eye gouged out, the joints of the left foot burned away, their only hope the release of death, when their mangled bodies will be tossed into the cesspit. See Leo the Great crossing the River Po for his encounter with Attila the Hun, scourge of Europe. Conjure up the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, doing penance in the snow at Canossa, while the haughty Pope Gregory VII looks down from a mist-shrouded castle.

This story truly has everything. Intrigue. Politics. Sex. Especially sex. The worst period in the history of the papacy was not the Renaissance, as most people suppose, but the tenth century. An exciting episode could be built around a lady called Marozia. She had,

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so to speak, a very close relationship with the papacy. She was the mother of one pope (whom she conceived at the age of fifteen by another pope), the aunt of a third pope, and the grandmother of a fourth. All in all, and with the help of her own dear mother, she created eight popes in nine years: two were strangled, one was suffocated, four were deposed. Marozia's crowded life ended at the age of 82: she was suffocated. One might be tempted to think that an institution that can survive such goings-on can survive anything.

BUT MARTIN'S THESIS rules out such complacent arguments. And his title turns out, on closer inspection, to be misleading. Gibbon could write *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* because he believed that it had at a given moment achieved a height of prosperity, prestige, and civilization. But in Martin's account of the papacy, there is never any pinnacle from which it *can* decline and fall. *Nascens morituras*, as Augustine said in another context: from the moment it was born it was doomed to death. The rot set in in the year 312 when Pope Sylvester made a deal with the Emperor Constantine. This was a fatal move, for it meant that Silvester was exchanging the preaching of a purely spiritual kingdom for a share in political power. This was, in Dante's memorable phrase, "the curse of Constantine": he lumbered the Church with an embarrassing burden that eventually became the Papal States. Sylvester made a "bargain with the world." According to Martin, this was gravely sinful of him, since Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The evil consequences of this fateful choice echo down the long corridors of history.

Occasionally, very occasionally, Martin comes across an historical figure who shares his nonrealized vision of a purely spiritual Church and a purely spiritual papacy. Once it was a pope: but Celestine V resigned and was murdered. More often it is a counselor like Contarini, Ambassador of Venice in the fifteenth century, but no one heeded him. Another advisor, Antonelli, wrote to the sick and aged Pius VI, who was being held prisoner of the French Revolution: "The old order is going. Better renounce all temporal power. Let us fight only with the weapons of the Spirit." He was ignored and the Papal States were restored. No doubt Martin feels that his own dire warnings will also be ignored. It is the fate of prophets.

Mind you, the Papal States ceased to exist in 1870—a fact one would hardly deduce from reading Martin. But coherence is not his strong suit. He presents himself as the advocate of a spiritual Church freed from the entanglements of political power; yet he has the gall to complain when the papacy's political influence is shown to be negligible. Look, he says, what happened to the papal appeal to the Ayatollah Khomeini on behalf of the U.S. hostages in Iran. The pope was snubbed, his appeal was rejected. This is supposed to illustrate "the decline of Catholic influence." But when did popes have *any* influence in the world of Islam? And in any case, the incident could equally well demonstrate the Moslem revival, the obstinacy of the Ayatollah, or whatever. It is totally illogical to talk about "the curse of Constantine" and to want to limit the political influence of the Church, and then to regret that it is applied unsuccessfully.

But far worse is to come. It is when we reach recent popes that Martin really begins to get hot under the collar. His sketches of John XXIII and Paul VI are pieces of character assassination that are inaccurate as history and would be libelous if applied to a living person. John Roncalli, he announces, "created the circumstances in which the authority and unity of his Church were destroyed." This is a defensible view. But Martin's study of Roncalli is so superficial that he is not entitled to pass such a judgment. He says, for example, that Roncalli was criticized as a "Modernist" during "his years as a professor in Rome." But (a) he never was a professor in Rome, he was a professor in Bergamo. And (b) the "criticism" of Roncalli turned out to be irrelevant since the man making them, Cardinal de Lai, mistakenly thought that Roncalli taught the New Testament; he didn't—he taught Church history and patristics.

THESE ARE MINOR inaccuracies, but they raise doubts about Martin's general reliability. We enter the realm of libel when he alleges that Pope John's most famous encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, "was largely the work of his collaborators, and it is doubtful if Roncalli ever really understood its proposals." In that case it is hard to see why Roncalli, so close to death, should have fought so hard for his "proposals" and defended them against theologians like Father (now Cardinal) Luigi Ciappi. Moreover, there is not the slightest evidence that John "changed his mind" (i.e., came round to the Martin view of the world) in the last weeks of his life. All that Martin manages to produce is a remark to Cardinal Ottaviani: "Yes, my dying now must be the hand of God." It is merely perverse to interpret this as meaning that his calling of the Second Vatican Council had been a ghastly mistake.

Indeed, the refutation of Martin's position is provided by a text which he quotes but does not date. "Now," wrote John in his diary,

> . . . our intention is to serve man as such, and not only Catholics; to defend above all and everywhere the rights of the human person, and not only those of the Catholic Church.

That was dated May 24, 1963, just a few days before his death on June 3. It is an important text because it marks clearly the transition from a Church that would concentrate on defending its own institutional interests to one that would try, however imperfectly, to be at the service of mankind. The irony is that when Martin is actually faced by a pope who relies on "spiritual weapons," as he advocates, he fails to recognize him. Martin's comment on the diary entry is monstrously unjust: "He wished, therefore, to establish solid contacts with the U.S.S.R. and Communist China; but in aid of this, he chose not to denounce Soviet imprisonment and torture."

SO MUCH HOSTILITY and ill will call for some explanation. A possible clue is provided by an incident in which Pope Pius XII, in conversation with Augustin Bea, Martin's former rector at the Biblical Institute in Rome, allegedly said that when he was Nuncio in Munich after World War I he studied the works of Karl Marx most carefully and reached the conclusion that Marx was a "Satanist." Most of the "Young Hegelians" with whom Marx associated were, according to Martin, Satanists. So, notoriously, were Bakunin and Proudhon. Marx did indeed unwisely write in a youthful poem:

> Till I go mad my heart is utterly changed,
> See this sword. The Prince of Darkness sold it to me.

Etc. Typical *bas romantisme* guff. But for Martin it is the end of the argument;

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Marxism is swept aside. Marxists are all in the grip of Satan. It is perfectly possible that Pius XII held this view: his actions and his policies were certainly consistent with it.

This must be why Pope John so annoys Martin. He had no use for this kind of self-righteous diabolism. He had seen the harm which followed from assigning Manichaean or Satanic roles to one's opponents. In perfect lucidity he made a distinction in *Pacem in Terris* which liberated the Church from fanaticism and intolerance. He distinguished between the error (always to be condemned) and the person who errs (always to be treated with respect). But clearly if you have a Satanic view of the universe and see Old Nick embodied in Moscow, you will not take kindly to someone who insists on recalling such an elementary Christian principle.

Martin's book tells us a great deal about what he feels about the papacy but very little about the Vatican as it actually is. He is quite simply out of touch. His picture of the Vatican housing "Communist 'moles,' clerical financial wizards, career diplomats, Marxist prelates, a brothel and over-worked exorcists" is a preposterous fantasy. I cannot understand how he has gulled television companies into believing that he is an "expert" on the Vatican today.

IT IS A RELIEF to turn to Francis X. Murphy, who takes his role as a Vaticanologist seriously enough to have a look at the place from time to time. He is aware of the Peter Drucker principle: "Knowledge not renewed, quickly becomes ignorance." Martin's villain—John XXIII—is Murphy's hero. But, like Martin, he is rather cavalier in his treatment of the facts. Here is one example.

Father Riccardo Lombardi, S.J., is always good for a laugh. A popular preacher of the 1950s, he was known as "God's microphone" and started a movement called "For a Better World"—an expression borrowed from his patron, Pius XII. Murphy reports:

> While Cardinal of Venice John had been advised to make a retreat at Lombardi's center outside Rome. John obediently packed his bags and reported to the retreat master; but after listening to two conferences he quietly returned to Rome.

An inspection of the *Journal of a Soul* would show that the retreat took place in Padua, that Roncalli did not much like it, but stuck it out to the end. In a passage omitted for some reason from the English translation of *Journal of a Soul*, Roncalli said that he admired Lombardi as "an elite religious, edifying and fervent to the point of exaltation." But he goes on to make plain his reservations. They concerned Lombardi's "historical judgments, his one-sided vision of the modern world, his aggressive, pessimistic, *franc-tireur* tone." This is not just a matter of getting the historical record straight, important though that is. It is a matter of deciding what Roncalli and Lombardi meant by the "reform" of the Church, for both were interested in the idea of a Council long before it happened. It also raises the question—hitherto undiscussed—of what Roncalli really thought about Pius XII and the men he favored. Serious historians would have to discuss such matters.

Murphy's book, however, contains one splendid joke for insiders. He has long been rumored to have authored the series of articles on the Vatican Council in the *New Yorker* which were later published in four volumes. The books were attributed to an unknown person called Xavier Rynne. Murphy has always denied most resolutely that

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he was Rynne. Rynne, it so happens, was his mother's maiden name. But that is neither here nor there. What is interesting is that in this book he lavishes immoderate praise on his alter ego. Rynne is described as "a perspicacious commentator on Vatican events," an advanced theologian ranking with Hans Küng and Yves Congar, and his books are said to be "as relevant and authentic as ever." It is all good clean fun. When one discovers in *The Papacy Today* a whole passage lifted from *Letters From Vatican City*, one can only conclude either that Murphy has plagiarized Rynne or that he has finally decided to break cover.

THE BEST WINE has been kept until last. Peter Nichols's book is a joy. In some ways it is badly put together. It is difficult to see why the discussion on ecumenism should be in a chapter called "The Road to Fatima," in which he confesses that he does not know why there has been a revival of "popular religion." But none of this matters. Nichols is so observant, so honest, and writes so elegantly that he can be forgiven in a book which is, as he says, like its subject, "presumptuously large." Nichols's great merit is that he actually went and looked for himself. He is more interested in reporting what others are saying than in sounding off with his own opinions. So he makes sense of things. He can explain just why the process of annulment is so much more healing than the process of divorce. He can tell you, most movingly, just why the death of Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador was a turning point in the history of the Church in Central America. As an outsider (though married to a Catholic, the Italian actress Paola Rosi), he has no axes to grind.

Not that he is uncritical. His view of the Catholic Church is summed up in the image of the Duessa in Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: beautiful, somewhat overdressed and overperfumed, but occasionally turning into a witch. His chapter on sex reveals the Duessa at her most two-faced. Paul VI's ban on artificial birth control is ascribed to his fear that to give way on this issue would weaken the authority of the Church and—alas! alack!—involve the damaging admission that "the Holy Spirit had been with the Anglican communion" all along. On which Nichols sensibly comments:

> Yet the Church has greater responsibilities than maintaining its style of authority. That does not mean maintaining its authority: that is something that it obviously has to do if it is to count at all, but the style of authority does not have to remain the same.

In any case, an authority that is widely ignored is discredited rather than confirmed. The repeated ban on birth control by John Paul II, and the total neglect of the evidence about world population, are summed up in a cruel image: "The voice, like that of an aging soprano, is no longer what it was."

Yet despite this critique, Catholic pundits in their hordes have hastened to congratulate Nichols and pay tribute to his book. All the Catholic establishment in Britain is on his side. Francis X. Murphy writes a letter to the publishers. I think the explanation is simply that they all acknowledge that Nichols knows a lot more than they do, and that they are secretly rather relieved that his assessment of their Church is so positive. The odd wart here and there does not affect the general verdict: there's life in the old girl yet, or, to put it more theologically, the Church can still put us in touch with areas of experience not otherwise available. Declining and falling she is certainly not.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

Peter Hebblethwaite is the Vatican affairs writer for the *National Catholic Reporter*. He has written many books on the Vatican and on recent popes and is currently working on a biography of Pope John XXIII.

THE TAINTING OF AMERICA

Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism by Reginald Horsman

(Harvard University Press, 367 pp., $22.50)

The shift in national conscience from the myth of American innocence to a preoccupation with national guilt has produced an outpouring of historical works on the latter theme. The field is rich and no part of it richer than the injustice, oppression, and brutality committed in the name of race during the conquest of a continent and expansion overseas. All of these works, apart from a few comparative studies, are limited to the American experience and many of them, implicitly or explicitly, convey the impression or encourage the inference that these evils are a national peculiarity. In some of them the tendency amounts to an exercise in the depiction of national character.

Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny* is in no way an exculpation of American guilt, but he does place it in wider perspective, illuminate the origins of the racial ideology behind it, and show the extent to which that ideology was anticipated and shared by other nations. Of English birth himself, Professor Horsman is well established in this country as an authority on frontier history. He writes with an easy familiarity with sources here and abroad. The question he poses for himself is why Americans of 1850 "have always made a lot less sense than the Americans of the Revolutionary generation" about their world mission, and he has "written this book in an attempt to find out why."

Nearly a third of the book deals with European origins of the myth of Anglo-Saxonism. The myth got its real start during the English Reformation as propaganda to justify the break with Rome. The emphasis then was on a purer English church that existed in pre-Norman England. Both in England and on the European continent the Anglo-Saxons were later linked to Germanic tribes described by Tacitus and discovered to have developed political institutions to which all freedom-loving people were indebted—especially English and American people. It was the Anglo-

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Saxon institutions, not race and blood, that Thomas Jefferson had in mind when he asked in 1776, "Is it not better now that we return at once into that happy system of our ancestors . . . as it stood before the eighth century?" That golden age of "the happy system" was the classic "Whig" view of the past. In the universalism of the Enlightenment all mankind was capable of benefiting from Anglo-Saxon blessings, not merely those of a particular race.

The new racial Anglo-Saxonism was developed later, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and was quite different. Its benefits were conferred by racial heritage, from which many peoples of the world were excluded. The emphasis that the romantic movement placed on the uniqueness and peculiar qualities of individuals and peoples fostered the growing obsession with race. In German romantic thought, each nation had its own *Volkgeist*, its peculiar national spirit ultimately springing from race. Poets, patriots, and novelists throughout Europe pitched in to jumble together incongruous ingredients of nationality, race, culture, and language into a potpourri of racial nationalism.

TO ACCOUNT for the diversity and inequality of races, scientists did more than their bit by boldly challenging biblical accounts in Genesis with theories of polygenesis—the diverse origins of races. They buttressed their theories with weighty evidence from the newly developed discipline of "craniology" and its specialties of "facial angle," skull capacity, structure, and shape. The new science of phrenology became "at least as influential in the first half of the nineteenth century as psychoanalysis was in the first half of the twentieth," according to a modern medical historian. Not climate or culture or terrain or accident but race was the ultimate determinant—not environment but blood.

In tune with the times, Englishmen and Americans shifted from Anglo-Saxon institutions to Anglo-Saxon blood as the explanation of their success and the inspiration of their world mission. To Thomas Carlyle race was the key to history and Anglo-Saxons were *the* race—the world theirs to improve. To Benjamin Disraeli, "All is race; there is no other truth"; Caucasians were the "superior class," and of them Hebrews were the "pure race." Charles Kingsley called the superior breed "the Teutonic race" and its inferiors "beasts" endowed with "a semihuman cunning" and destined for subordination or extinction.

Americans knew from the start that they were a chosen people with a special destiny, but before about 1815 they did not often see race or Anglo-Saxon identity as an explanation for their good fortune and superior achievement. And they tended to account for the gap between their achievement and that of other peoples by environment rather than innate racial differences. This assumption left open the possibility of all people sharing the civilization developed by the few. That was a heritage of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, an optimism that never fully permeated the plantation society of the South nor the frontier culture of the West.

Transatlantic doctrines of racial Anglo-Saxonism found an eager market in the United States of the early nineteenth century. In the first place, racial differences had long been dramatized by the presence of three races in constant contact, and American ideals of Republican perfection and democratic pretensions had long been embarrassed by black slaves and oppressed Indians. What better solution than to blame the plight of the oppressed on themselves—their race. Violence on the frontier engendered by white advance was projected on Indians provoked to resist; degradation engendered by slavery justified continued enslavement. Blacks were not debased because they were slaves, but enslaved because debased. Just as innate racial traits explained the plight of black and red people, the innate racial superiority of the whites justified and made inevitable the triumph of the "Anglo-Saxons."

AMERICANS NOT ONLY absorbed the racial thought common to the whole of Europe but generated and exported contributions of their own that added a special virulence to the doctrines. There was no sharp distinction between scientific racialism and literary racial nationalism, but the racial question occupied the center of scholarly discussion in the United States by the late 1840s. American science contributed its full share of nonsense to the lore of polygenesis, craniology, and phrenology and added learned explanations of why blacks were enslaved and Indians decimated, while Anglo-Saxons continued to expand their settlements. William Gilmore Simms, the South Carolina novelist, anticipated an Orwellian irony by saying that "slavery will be the medium & agent" of bringing freedom to Texas and Mexico. New Englanders had no slaves to protect or Indians to scalp, but Emerson, Theodore Parker, Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, and Parkman added their voices to the Anglo-Saxon chorus.

By 1830 the whites who rejected Indians as equal fellow citizens or as potentially assimilable human beings were clearly dominant, and the policy of Indian removal in violation of treaties went forward unimpeded. It was not that the Cherokees of Georgia had failed to adapt to white ways: they had made exceptional adaptations. It was because they were Indians, because whites refused to accept them within their society, and because of Georgian greed for land. Tocqueville enjoys credit for a famous paradox about American Indian policy: "It is impossible to destroy men with more respect to the laws of humanity." A moment's reflection, however, would rob this quip of paradox, whatever might be conceded in the way of irony—intentional or not.

It would be a great convenience to a people with dreams of conquering and possessing a continent to be sure that the conquest was not only inevitable but righteous. This was especially true of a people who laid great stress on having a clear conscience and who believed their nation to be divinely ordained for great missions. To reconcile

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their ambitions with their conscience, the blame for the suffering they would inevitably cause must be fixed elsewhere. It would be most convenient of all if the blame could be laid upon the victims themselves for their racial weaknesses and the conquest could be seen as inevitable because of the superiority of the advancing race. All these ideological conveniencies were supplied by racial Anglo-Saxonism and, together with romantic and scientific elaborations, furnished one of the firmest foundations of American innocence while national guilt was being most rapidly accrued.

By 1845, when the term "Manifest Destiny" was coined, all was in readiness for the next great leap that would carry the flag of racial supremacy to the Pacific. In the way stood the Mexicans, and they quickly came in for the process of dehumanization applied to Indians and others who were to be abused or destroyed by the inevitable advance of superior Anglo-Saxons. Mexicans were obviously one of the inferior breeds, a "mongrel" race (Saxons were "mixed") interbred with Indians and blacks. It could be no crime to take the lands of such barbarians and fill them with thriving and superior Anglo-Saxons when it was God's injunction to multiply and to make the land fruitful. Already there were dreams of "an Anglo-Saxon United States of the World," and others who called for "universal annexation" and heralded the "New Rome."

Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny* has pushed back and multiplied the origins of racial Anglo-Saxonism to an earlier era than it has been generally assumed to exist. He has also demonstrated how a major burden of historic national guilt was incurred in the age of innocence and revealed much about the underlying foundations and the fragility of that innocence.

C. VANN WOODWARD

THE MEANING OF PR

The Truants: Adventures Among the Intellectuals by William Barrett

(Anchor Press/Doubleday, 270 pp., $15.95)

Given the reputation of the New York intelligentsia—a group that is now passing into cultural history—it is often assumed that there is nothing more to be said about its individual members or the phenomenon as a whole. Yet the surprising fact is that few of this large and heterogeneous company—Philip Rahv, Meyer Schapiro, Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, William Phillips, Dwight MacDonald, Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg—have published memoirs about their lives, though they were far from reticent in promulgating their ideas. Except for a few autobiographies that touched upon aspects of the New York intellectual circle as they affected the personal development of the writer, there is a dearth of substantial recollections for the curious reader or the serious historian. In contrast to the English intellectuals, in and out of each other's books and beds, for whom the diary and the memoir in which gossip ranks with wisdom have the stature of Holy Writ, the New Yorkers have been typically wasteful Americans, letting the wisecracks and the arguments, the alliances and enmities, drift away into the smoky air of oblivion.

It is particularly strange that until now, with the publication of William Barrett's *The Truants*, there has been no coherent account, told from the inside, of that once powerful magazine, the *Partisan Review*, which in its heyday, in the 1940s and 1950s, became the very voice and soul of the New York intelligentsia. In its time it wielded a kind of cultural influence that no journal today has been able to emulate, for it was the first magazine to define with aggressive confidence the issues—modernism in literature and art, Marxism in politics—that were taking hold in American culture. Even after the inner circle had split apart, and the intelligentsia began to unravel as a clearly definable community of ideas and allegiances, the subsequent eminence of poets, critics, philosophers, and novelists who were first discovered and encouraged by the editors of *PR* extended the influence of the magazine far beyond Manhattan and long past its prime. (In my youth the initials *PR* meant one thing only, *Partisan Review*; it may say something about our time that today p.r. stands for "public relations.")

THE STORY of the remarkable group—originally Philip Rahv, William Phillips, Dwight MacDonald, F. W. Dupee, Mary McCarthy, and George L. K. Morris, although the last four soon left the editorial field entirely to Rahv and Phillips—which boldly set out in 1937 to do battle with the Stalinist *Zeitgeist* and become the arbiters of American culture could be told adequately only by an insider like William Barrett, who was an associate editor from the time he returned from the war until the mid-1950s, and who has a more retentive memory than a herd of elephants. Moreover, though an insider, he had the unique advantage of being the only gentile—an Irish Catholic—in the pervasively Jewish atmosphere made up of Rahv, Phillips, and the other junior editor, Delmore Schwartz; he did not look at the world in quite the same way, or with the same instinctive assumptions and prejudices, as his Jewish colleagues, and this gave him a degree of detachment. Though Barrett had been an undergraduate at City College when it was almost solidly Jewish, and though his fellow editors joked about his being an honorary Jew, he could never lose sight of the fact, as he writes, that

> if you are not a Jew, you are not a Jew—and the abyss yawns between yourself and that idealized image you have constructed, no matter how close you seem to approximate.

Barrett had first encountered the *PR* circle before the war when, working for a graduate degree in philosophy at Columbia, he met Delmore Schwartz, then the most dazzling prodigy yet embraced by the editors of the magazine. To the young student from Queens, bored by his courses and the petty squabbles of academia, the group represented

> the world of bohemia and the arts, of political movements and countermovements, bold and sweeping ideologies; and they . . . were therefore beings invested in my eyes with a strange and mysterious glamour.

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When Barrett later found himself within the inner sanctum of *PR*, at Schwartz's behest, the mystery and glamour were quickly dispelled by his shocked discovery that intellectuals can be as mean, sly, rude, and treacherous as ordinary mortals. As Barrett wryly observes in his account of Delmore Schwartz's descent into madness,

> Nobody seems to have devised a way of building an intellectual and literary circle without adding immeasurably to the usual stock of nastiness, bitchery, and backbiting that are the lot of human nature. Perhaps that is the price humanity has to pay for the centers that generate ideas.

In the case of Philip Rahv, the autocrat of the cafeteria table whose editorial word was law around *PR*, that price could seem high to those who swam into his ken, for he could behave like a thug. There have been some valiant attempts since Rahv's death in 1973 to grasp the labyrinthine complexity of his perverse and intimidating personality—notably Irving Howe's brief but evocative memoir, and Dorothea Strauss's portrait in *Palaces and Prisons*—but it is unlikely that anyone will improve upon Barrett's sympathetic, rueful, yet shrewdly unsentimental account of the man and his mind.

RAHV ARRIVED in America with his Russian-Jewish parents and without a word of English at the age of fourteen, and educated himself with remarkable thoroughness in the Jackson Square public library. (Oddly, Barrett neglects to tell us that Philip Rahv was born Ivan Greenberg, and that it has been claimed he adopted his American name because it is the Hebrew word for "rabbi.") In any case, Rahv was most unrabbinically spiteful, cackling with *Schadenfreude*, a black-souled nihilist who rarely had a good word to say about another human being. Despite his lifelong intractable faith in Marxism, he would have been hard put to name anyone who deserved the putative blessings of socialism. As an editor he was imperious, conspiratorial, crushingly contemptuous of philistines, Stalinists, and bad writing. Yet the tantalizing paradox of Rahv was that as a literary critic, particularly in his fine essays on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the menacing ruffian who doled out lumps right and left (especially left) gave way to a meditative and sensitive mind, analytically sophisticated, subtle, and surprisingly nondoctrinaire. If you knew only the Little Caesar side of Rahv, it was hard to credit his role in the Henry James revival of the 1940s, though he repudiated this achievement toward the end of his life, in part because he could no longer endure being out of step with the times and had reverted to the radicalism of his youth.

Just as Rahv inevitably dominated any group in which he found himself, whether it was a party or an editorial conference, so his gruff and polemical voice, the bearlike inescapability of his presence, monopolizes a large part of *The Truants*. He is even responsible for the title, for he had long thought of writing a novel, called just that, about the many literary aspirants who wandered in and out of the *PR* offices, "escaping for a few years into bohemia, playing truant from the ordinary ways of life." For Barrett this idea of truancy has a crucial relevance for our time, and he catches in this figurative net not only the would-be novelist but the ideologically possessed intellectual who

> goes in search of original and sweeping ideas, and in the process may conveniently forget the humbling conditions of his own existence. In politics, for example, that his own continued existence as a dissenter depends on the survival of the United States as a free nation in a world going increasingly totalitarian.

To those book-chat liberals who still cling to the anti-American pieties of the 1960s, such sentiments are "reactionary"; one reviewer of *The Truants* concluded, after some grudging lip-service to Barrett's eloquence and honesty, that "if his logic is correct, then we should be ready to die for anti-Communism." Better dead than misread.

IF RAHV'S VOICE is the loudest, Delmore Schwartz's is at once the funniest and the most disturbing, for he brings to this memoir the unrelieved darkness of tragedy. All but forgotten when he died in 1966 at the age of 53, Schwartz has recently attained a sad, posthumous prominence through James Atlas's biography and Saul Bellow's brilliant portrait in *Humboldt's Gift*. Bellow's Charlie Citrine, stumbling on Humboldt's inflated obituary in the *Times*, sourly remarks: "Having lost his talent, his mind, fallen apart, died in ruin, he rose again on the cultural Dow-Jones and enjoyed briefly the prestige of significant failure." William Barrett is kinder, for he was Schwartz's closest friend for much longer than anyone else could suffer that mercurial temperament, and he bears witness to the disintegration of the poet's prodigious lyrical gifts and pyrotechnical wit with a mournful sense of helplessness and waste. Though Barrett does not say it in so many words, Schwartz always had, in tandem with the rhetorical dazzle, a streak of malicious cruelty that may, for all anyone knows, have been the earliest beginnings of his paranoia. When his precocity deserted him, no longer the sure thing his work and reputation relied on, he quarreled with everyone and his life turned into a literal enactment of Wordsworth's grim prophecy: "We poets in our youth begin in gladness, / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness." As he grew more violently manic, even William Barrett, for so many years the most devoted and forgiving of friends, feared being caught in the trap of derange-

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ment, and backed away. Though he writes about Schwartz's self-destruction with painful candor, he refuses to cheapen and falsify his friend's pathetic end with the currently fashionable notion that such poets as Schwartz, Sylvia Plath, and John Berryman were *poètes maudits*, the doomed victims of an "alienating" society. As he sensibly observes, the troubles of these poets "were so obviously deep-seated in the personality that neither of those abstract specters, Society or Poetry, can be invoked as culprits." One can only be grateful for William Barrett's cool refutation of such modish glibness.

In the course of these memoirs, most purposefully in the chapter on the Abstract Expressionist painters and the discussion of Lionel Trilling, Barrett moves beyond personality and raises some more complex and fundamental questions about the meaning of modernism and the relationship between politics and literature. To begin with, there was the glaring anomaly at the heart of literary modernism, which Trilling had been one of the first to discern: the great innovators like Eliot, Yeats, and Pound were political reactionaries, uncompromisingly inimical to the democratic, egalitarian ideals of socialism, and in extreme cases even lured by the siren's song of fascism. Yet an editor of *Partisan Review* like Delmore Schwartz, who considered himself a Marxist, could take as his idol T. S. Eliot, who called himself a royalist. At the same time, the Marxists of *PR* argued that there was no real contradiction in their commitment to avant-garde art and literature, since they were the spearhead of rebellion against bourgeois institutions and values. This might not have put all doubts to rest, but if you supported the enemies of the bourgeoisie, you were on the right side.

What they overlooked was the fact that the avant-garde artists who had kindled the revolution against stultifying traditions were a thing of the past, and had by the mid-twentieth century become the revered darlings of the middle class, their work now signs of cultural chic. Moreover, as Lionel Trilling proposed in a disturbing sociological observation, a change had occurred in the character of the avant-garde movement; as increasingly large numbers of the middle class adopted its adversary stance toward their society, the culture became turned against itself. What this meant for *Partisan Review* was that it had unwittingly allied itself with the bourgeoisie in its dedication to modernist attitudes and art. This was bad enough, but to have such unsettling truth revealed by one of their own was even worse.

Indeed, years before this occurred, Trilling had raised the hackles of the *PR* Marxists with his famous essay "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," in which he argued that snobbery and manners—the "buzz of implication" derived from class distinctions—have been one of the most fruitful sources of material for the novelist absorbed by the "thick texture" of social reality. In an outraged Marxist rebuttal, Delmore Schwartz accused Trilling of cloaking an unconscionable political attitude—a defense of class divisions—in a deviously literary argument. Thirty years later William Barrett, having moved toward the other end of the spectrum, praises Trilling's literary argument but insists on politicizing the issue by asserting that class distinctions are not only of incalculable value to novelists but to society as well. He may very well be right, but in the process he does not confront Trilling's more subtle point, which was also the burden of his case against the liberal heirs of Stalinism: a literary judgment does not necessarily lead to a similar political conclusion. This is not something which ideological Marxists *or* ideological conservatives want to hear.

YET WHILE BARRETT does seem genuinely concerned with striking a scrupulous balance in his discussion of Lionel Trilling, and pays eloquent homage to his grace, intelligence, and style, in the end his serious reservations about Trilling's intellectual achievement bring him to a strange contradiction. Though much of what he has been saying up to this point in *The Truants* about the reckless disregard of modernism for standards, taste, tradition, and feeling would indicate that he has come to be deeply skeptical of the entire sweep of the modernist vision, he reproaches Trilling for being unrespon-

TALKING TO FERNANDO

—to my son

Life is swell like this, life is great,
with everything going past all the time.
It's easy here — inside the speed,
just sitting snug in the groove,
just cruising on ahead.
Nothing's too fast, nothing too slow.
Hell, look, we've got no worries,
not when we're rolling like this.
We don't need anything else.
Things are smooth, right? things are fine,
nothing could be better than this.
Take the wheel whenever you like.
And when I drive, you don't have to talk,
you can sleep, you can look out the window
— that's cool, that's okay, everything's okay
as long as we keep on going this way.

I'll tell you what.
I want to give you something.
I want to give you a lot.
If I've got it, you can have it.
You want my Harley chopper? It's yours.
I'll throw in the windjammer fairing.
I'll throw in the slipstreamer 'shield.
I'll give you the stereo deck.
Really, I want you to have it.
Just name it, you've got it.

Meanwhile, it's so great this way.
Even when we get to New York
we don't have to stop — I mean it.
We can keep on going.
We can go all night like this,
We can go all year.
What the hell, we can go anywhere.
How does California sound?
I bet you we could make Peru.

Listen, I'll give you my golden helmet,
the one with the little decals you liked.
You see? I didn't forget.
I'll give you the silver jacket
I won shooting craps last year.
Remember my new green boots,
the ones with the fancy tooling?
I'll give you them, too.
I'll give you my honey gloves.

IRVING FELDMAN

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sive to the unconscious forces explored in modernist literature, for having in the end been too genteel, too much of a civilized humanist, to appreciate the modernist sensibility. On the one hand modernism is destructive in its detachment from feeling, yet on the other it conveys a sense of religious mystery, if only through anxiety about its absence, and Barrett laments the fact that Trilling was too incorrigible a secular rationalist "to betray even for a moment a passing longing for the Absolute." Barrett argues that the "withdrawal of God" is the figure in the carpet of modern history that Trilling could not see. Yet Barrett's discussion of religion is so vague and tentative that even at this crucial juncture of his argument with Trilling, he cannot make clear what form he believes the "return of the sacred" might take in contemporary life.

Thinking of the book as a whole, one cannot help suspecting that *The Truants* was originally conceived on a more modest scale—a memoir in the form of portraits—than what it finally became: a tantalizingly suggestive, but thinly realized attempt to draw, from the exhaustion of Marxism and modernism as they played themselves out in the story of *Partisan Review*, a far-reaching polemical lesson about the imperative need for a new moral and religious consciousness in our time. The issues he raises are indisputably important, but in this anecdotal context of recollection Barrett fails to do them justice.

THERE REMAINS a nagging question: what can these memories of the *Partisan Review* intellectuals mean to those who were never part of that passionate, noisy, incestuous little world? It was, Barrett remembers, "as closed and inbred as a conventicle of monks," and elsewhere, in an ethnically more exact image, he speaks of the ghetto-like mentality of Rahv & Co., who rarely ventured above 14th Street and regarded midtown Manhattan as "an alien territory, the haunt of the middlebrows and philistines of the cultural world." Certainly the political and literary issues that obsessed these nonstop talkers and schemers, while they undoubtedly have some relevance to the present day, are no longer so clear-cut as they seemed thirty years ago. Neither of *PR*'s incompatible fealties—to Marxism in politics and to modernism in art—has the same holy authority for intellectuals today, though neither doctrine has by any means withered away. Among those survivors of the monkish conventicle like Barrett himself, the will to believe has for excellent reasons moved in a very different direction from the Marxist-modernist certainties, taking a conservative and vaguely religious form that is anathema to those radical pieties still lingering in American culture. Those young intellectuals who have any curiosity about the political battles of the mid-century will most likely be repelled by the conservative conclusions Barrett reaches, and it hardly needs saying that the modernist exhilarations of an earlier era have long since subsided, the daring experiments of, say, *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* being now thoroughly absorbed into the classical canon. (As for *PR* itself, which Phillips continued to edit after he and Rahv parted company in the late 1950s, that quintessentially New York magazine is now published in Boston.)

THE PLOT IS gripping, for Barrett tells the story with great vividness, but what about the actors—what interest do they hold for those who could never have known them? Neither Philip Rahv nor Delmore Schwartz left behind a large and significant body of work, and though Barrett loyally—and rightly—singles out those few poems and stories such as "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," that will, he thinks, perdure, he must finally acknowledge that, given such extraordinary gifts, Delmore Schwartz's literary career must be judged "a human failure." Though a considerable number of Rahv's critical essays are by no means negligible, as a whole his work, too, is disappointingly fragmentary, the major book on Dostoevsky still unfinished when he died. It is possible to foresee a time when the stubbornly elusive personality of Philip Rahv, hunted like a fox in countless memoirs, will overwhelm whatever interest remains in his achievement as a critic. In a sense this fate has already overtaken Delmore Schwartz, who attained the form and being of art not in his own writing but as Saul Bellow's creature. It is an ironic legacy for the precocious young poet who hoped to become another Eliot.

To those readers too young to have known the *PR* circle personally, the appeal of *The Truants* may well be that of a period piece exceptionally rich in lively gossip and wisecracks. As we know from all the Bloomsbury volumes, the literary memoir can provide the writer with too *blanche* a *carte* for settling scores best left buried in the dust of the past. Unfortunately William Barrett has not resisted this temptation strongly enough, though he disingenuously claims at one point that he sought to protect the living, "who are still struggling to cope with things, and who are easily upset by any disobliging remark." Having forgotten absolutely nothing, Barrett is not above using the rattlesnake wit of, among others, the young Mary McCarthy to denigrate a few living monuments along with the dead. Philip Rahv rationalized his loose and malicious tongue as "analytic exuberance," which Delmore Schwartz translated as "Philip's euphemism for sticking a knife in your back," and some of that "exuberance" clings to Barrett's memoir. With all the admiration he expresses for Lionel Trilling, he cannot suppress a gratuitous flick of malice in equating Trilling with Walter Lippmann as a Jew "who eschewed religious attachment lest it exclude him from the American mainstream." Barrett is too intelligent not to realize that this comparison is unjust and far from the truth.

The world of the New York Jewish intelligentsia was, as Barrett has skillfully demonstrated, manically complex and as manically diverse as the different personalities that composed it. There is the risk, which all generalizations run, of overriding those idiosyncratic differences that make any intellectual milieu distinctive. Only occasionally does Barrett sound like Lady Jean Campbell, an ex-wife of Norman Mailer, who in a moment of exquisite delirium once told the Catholic novelist Wilfrid Sheed, "All you Jewish intellectuals are alike." But then, Barrett also knows, and better than most, that some are less alike than others.

PEARL BELL

Pearl Bell regularly reviews fiction for *Commentary*.

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THE WILSON WARS

Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography by Edwin A. Weinstein

(Princeton University Press, 398 pp., $18.50)

Woodrow Wilson tried to wage "the war to end all wars," and failed. His biographers have proved no more successful in terminating the biographical battles that have raged since his death in 1924. As so often happens, his earliest chroniclers were among the most devoted acolytes at the flame of his memory. They included, most conspicuously, Ray Stannard Baker, a prominent journalist and associate of Wilson's. His eight-volume biography, appearing in the 1920s and 1930s, depicted Wilson as an earnest idealist whose admirable aims had been cruelly thwarted by the crush of events and the machinations of less visionary men. Far more critical of Wilson as an obsolete moralizer, woefully innocent of the realities of modern economics and diplomacy, was John Morton Blum's *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* in 1956. It was challenged two years later by Arthur Walworth's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Woodrow Wilson*, a careful, comprehensive, and adoring account (Walworth spoke unabashedly of Wilson as "the prophet").

Debate among historians had focused for more than a generation on whether Wilson should be regarded as a naive idealist or an astute realist. Then Alexander and Juliette George published *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* in 1956, dramatically altering the terms of argument about the 28th President. De-emphasizing the old realist-idealist controversy, the Georges instead examined Wilson's personality structure in an effort to explain his public career. Praised at the time as a major contribution to Wilson scholarship, the Georges' study has also earned a reputation as a model of responsible "psychohistory."

In a class by himself among Wilson scholars is Arthur S. Link. The five volumes published to date in his definitive biography bring the story down to Wilson's request to Congress for a declaration of war against Germany on April 2, 1917. In addition, Link is the editor of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, a massive editorial project, amounting so far to nearly forty impressively annotated volumes.

Edwin Weinstein's *Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography* now appears as a supplement to *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, an imprimatur of considerable significance. The book displays the customary thoroughness and editorial care that have made the *Papers* justly famous as a model scholarly project. Yet this study also rests on dubious evidence and engages in fanciful speculative leaps to a degree that will surprise those who have grown accustomed to the scrupulously empirical quality of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*.

Weinstein has here launched a major offensive in the long-protracted Wilson wars. His strategic objective is to sweep the Georges' account from the scholarly field—a campaign he began with a rather ferocious little sally three years ago in the pages of *Political Science Quarterly*. His chief tactic is to invoke learned medical explanations—he is a professor of neurology—for Wilson's behavior at several critical points in his career.

The portrait of Wilson that emerges resembles the Georges' description as a photographic negative resembles a print. Where they sketched shadows, he renders light. The key to Wilson's personality, the Georges argued, was his ego-damaging relationship with his father, whom they presented as a nagging, domineering tyrant. They pictured a Wilson who harbored deep subconscious resentment of his father, sought power to compensate for the low self-estimates fostered by his upbringing, and proved unable to compromise with anyone—most notoriously Dean Andrew Fleming West and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge—who evoked recollections of his childhood humiliations at the hands of his father. Weinstein, in contrast, insists that Wilson accurately expressed his attitude toward his father, at all levels of consciousness, in the dedication of his first book, *Congressional Government*, where he wrote: "To his father, the patient guide of his youth, the gracious companion of his manhood, his best instructor and most lenient critic, this book is affectionately dedicated by the author." Far more important than Wilson's relation with his father, says Weinstein, was his relation with his mother, a hypochondriacal, gloomy, neurasthenic, and overprotective parent. She nurtured Wilson's obsessive anxiety about his own health, as well as his arrogant assumption of superiority and his tendency to blame his setbacks on the injustice of others.

MOST NOTABLY, Weinstein substitutes physiological explanations for the Georges' psychological analysis of Wilson's actions. Here, of course, he enters another long-running battle among behavioral scientists, and Weinstein stakes his colors in the camp of those who proclaim that biochemistry has far more to say about the human condition than does psychoanalysis. He suggests, for example, that Wilson's vivid, metaphor-rich style of speaking and writing may have owed far less to the influence of literary models or coaching by his incessantly sermonizing father than it did to his apparently "mixed cerebral dominance" for language. He hypothesizes that neither hemisphere of Wilson's brain—the left responsible for processing individual phonetic and verbal parts, the right for perceiving words "as visual and auditory gestalts"—fully predominated over the other, thus producing Wilson's singular, and often distinguished, rhetorical style. This condition, Weinstein asserts, also contributed to Wilson's "developmental dyslexia," as evidenced by the fact that young Woodrow could not read until he was about 12 years old.

This assertion of an organic basis for Wilson's reading disability (which the Georges attributed to subconscious protest against his demanding father) is but one of several intriguing medical diagnoses that Weinstein makes. His most significant claim is that Wilson suffered a number of strokes over a period of decades preceding the massive, crippling attack that cut him down in the midst of his struggle for ratification of the Versailles Treaty in October 1919. (The precise number of strokes is unclear; some events are so designated in the text, but not in the prefatory "Chronology of Woodrow Wilson's Ma-

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jor Illnesses.") This claim, and the evidence on which it rests, deserves the closest scrutiny.

The sole expert medical testimony about Wilson's symptoms that has been preserved is the diary of his personal physician, Dr. Cary T. Grayson. Unfortunately, it covers only a ten-month period from December 1918 to September 1919, during which no strokes are alleged to have occurred. The other expert medical opinion that Weinstein cites—which consists of one physician's recollections, in 1967, of what a second physician remembered reading in the files of a third (and examining) physician, the well-known ophthalmologist Dr. George de Schweinitz—is hardly admissable as reliable diagnostic or historical evidence. And even this fourth-hand diagnosis makes no mention of "stroke." Yet Weinstein, relying exclusively on lay observers' descriptions of symptoms, unqualifiedly pronounces Wilson to have been afflicted by strokes in 1896, 1904, and 1906, in addition to the undisputed attack of 1919. The event of 1906, which occurred in the midst of Wilson's struggles to reform Princeton, figures especially prominently in Weinstein's account.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

On May 28, 1906, Wilson awoke blind in his left eye. Weinstein attributes this condition to occlusion in the ocular artery. The occluding particle allegedly broke off from a larger blockage in the carotid artery, a major supplier of blood to the brain. Weinstein therefore concludes that Wilson suffered a "major stroke," one that helps account for his failure to effect his plans for the reform of education at Princeton.

This diagnosis, and the explanatory uses to which it is put, raises vexing questions. Blindness is the only discrete symptom mentioned; other typical effects of stroke, such as paralysis or aphasia, apparently were not present. Moreover, *all* surviving contemporary accounts ascribe Wilson's blindness not to arterial occlusion, but to ocular hemorrhage, a localized event with no necessary implications for damage to the brain. Weinstein himself, in an earlier account of this same episode (in the *Journal of American History*, 1970), wrote that "De Schweinitz found that the blindness had been caused by the bursting of a blood vessel in the eye." For some reason, Weinstein has now seen fit to exclude all evidence that disputes his present diagnosis, and, some seventy-five years after the fact, to revise the apparent diagnosis of the examining physician.

This is neither prudent medicine nor sound history. Few doctors, one suspects, would so confidently jettison the opinions of their colleagues in similar circumstances. In any case, as Dr. Lorrin M. Koran pointed out in 1975 in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, in those cases where medical second opinions are sought in a diagnosis, disagreement about specific pathologies is "the rule and agreement only a rare exception." (For example, in one of Koran's samples, two examining physicians agreed on a variety of heart-valve conditions only between 13 and 47 percent of the time.) Weinstein, in fact, disagrees with himself in his diagnosis of Wilson's illness at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, which he had earlier (in the JAH) labeled a stroke, but now calls influenza. So long as medical diagnosis remains such a disputatious and tentative art, it seems irresponsible to pronounce as unimpeachable fact what should rightly be regarded as unestablished hypothesis.

Weinstein's tendency to inflate slender evidence into swollen conclusions is not confined to the physiological aspects of his subject. This purports to be, after all, a psychological as well as a medical biography, and though Weinstein doesn't provide a coherent psychological treatment, he points to some arresting implications of Wilson's involvement with Mary Allen Hulbert Peck, an attractive woman with whom Wilson carried on a fitful liaison between 1907 and 1915. His guilt about this illicit relationship supposedly led him to proclaim what Weinstein rather grandly calls "the doctrine of the new morality," and to dedicate himself to a life of public service. On close inspection, this "doctrine" turns out to be a version of the widely shared progressive belief that the immorality of individual politicians or tycoons could not be taken as an adequate explanation for the deep, structural inequities of society. Wilson's pronouncements about the need to distinguish private from public morality are indeed suggestive about the parallels between

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his own private life and his public career. But the facts remain that Wilson's ruminations about Mrs. Peck produced political ideas that were neither original nor unique; they could hardly be said to be decisive in Wilson's career, which since boyhood he had charted in the direction of high public office (as a student he had dreamed of becoming a United States Senator).

WEINSTEIN'S GENERAL approach might best be described as the method of escalation. He prefers complex explanations to simple ones, and with respect to medical evidence, arcane diagnoses to patent ones. Thanks in large part to Weinstein's own research, there is now little doubt that Wilson had a pronounced tendency to psychosomatic illness, suffered several physical traumas throughout his adult life, and was plagued by progressive vascular disease. These facts alone constitute important data for any considered assessment of Wilson. He was, we must now recognize, a sick man during much of his public career. Yet Weinstein is not content with that important but modest conclusion. At virtually every point he seeks to argue a "worst case" version of Wilson's condition. Why, one wonders, is he so insistent? Why was he not satisfied to posit more prosaic pathologies than "strokes," and to deal with the behavioral aspects of those more common afflictions—especially since Dr. Weinstein has an eminent reputation as an expert on the behavioral aspects of disease?

It is difficult to avoid the answer that Weinstein has employed this particular method of analysis because he has conceived of his book as an apologia for Wilson. By invoking sometimes shaky evidence about a series of medical traumas, Weinstein repeatedly rescues Wilson from criticism on grounds of politics, personality, or plain poor judgment. He focuses almost exclusively on Wilson's failures. Successes, though they require serious biographical explanation no less than defeats, he passes over in the hottest haste. (The great legislative triumphs of Wilson's first term, for example, are dispatched in a single paragraph.)

The liabilities of this approach are evident in Weinstein's discussion of Wilson's fight to win Senate approval of the Versailles Treaty. Few students of the episode would quarrel with the idea that Wilson's stroke in October 1919 jeopardized the prospects for Senate ratification. Weinstein, however, says flatly "that the cerebral dysfunction which resulted from Wilson's devastating strokes prevented the ratification of the Treaty." He strongly implies that a healthy, clear-minded Wilson could have "bridged the gap" with his opponents, by accepting at last a compromise with his nemesis, Henry Cabot Lodge. What prevented that otherwise inevitable compromise, Weinstein suggests, was the mental impairment occasioned by the stroke of 1919.

A MAJOR DIFFICULTY with this analysis is the plausible argument that, strictly speaking, Wilson's stroke did not render a necessary compromise impossible; rather, it made necessary a compromise that a healthy Wilson might possibly have avoided. A vigorous President might well have succeeded in rallying public support for his unamended version of the treaty, and in bringing Lodge to heel. Illness aborted that strategy, and some accommodation with Lodge was now required. Wilson's real tragedy lay in his denial of the political consequences of his illness, and his perversely tenacious adherence to his pre-stroke position. But Wilson emphatically did not *change* his position as a result of his stroke. Weinstein's discussion, which ties Wilson's behavior tightly to a specific traumatic event, deflects attention from the consistency (for better or worse) of Wilson's strategy, and from the underlying elements of his character that originally inclined him toward that strategy.

This is but one example of Weinstein's tendency to avoid deep questions of character, and instead to seek explanations (or excuses) for Wilson's behavior in discrete medical episodes, whose severity and impact he typically exaggerates. In a sense, his treatment of Woodrow Wilson confirms the worst fears we all have about how we are viewed by our physicians—as bundles of symptoms without that informing spiritual bond that we moderns call a personality, and that Wilson and his Presbyterian forebears called a soul. This book, hardly the biography to end all biographies, has left the subject of Wilson's soul as enigmatic as ever.

DAVID M. KENNEDY

David M. Kennedy, professor of history at Stanford, is the author most recently of *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford University Press). He is currently working on a volume dealing with the period from 1930 to 1945 in the Oxford History of the United States.

COMING:
Nadine Gordimer
on Alan Paton.

BRIEF REVIEW

The Fortunate Traveller by Derek Walcott

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 99 pp., $11.95)

In a poem called "North and South," the poet and playwright Derek Walcott (who divides his time between his native Trinidad and an adopted United States) writes that "I accept my function / as a provincial elegist at the end of an empire, / a single, circling, homeless satellite." *The Fortunate Traveller* (ironically titled, and dedicated to fellow poet-in-exile Joseph Brodsky) itself divides into three parts—North, South, North—and reflects on dislocations not only of home but of language.

One of the most talented poets of his generation now writing in America, Walcott is also one of the poets most indebted to formal traditions in English poetry. He has assigned himself the perilous balancing act of absorbing the imperial culture without seeming to do it obeisance. Increasingly, and with ingenious results, he has sought to cross-fertilize the stately English we recognize with Caribbean dialect. In *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, his previous book, "The Schooner *Flight*" is narrated in this half-and-half diction by a Caribbean poet-seaman who explains that "you would have / to be colonial to know the difference, / to know the pain of history words contain." A sibling poem in the present volume, "The Spoiler's Return," portrays a politicized narrator, The Spoiler, aware of his one foot in the native vernacular and the other in, astonishingly, the satirical couplets of

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Lord Rochester. If the two traditions sometimes jar rather than gel, producing unconvincing or awkward effects, the marriage is frequently lyrical ("The shark, racing the shadow of the shark / across clear coral rocks, does make them dark") or amusing ("All you go bawl out, 'Spoils, things ain't so bad,' / This ain't the Dark Age, is just Trinidad").

But it is not only as a Trinidadian that Walcott seeks to establish a fruitful and proper relation to the cultural history he draws upon. In one of the finest poems here, "Greece," he pictures himself carrying a "body"—the book of myth—to a cliff where he may cast it off, and declaims with ironically classical power: "I held air without language in my hands. / My head was scoured of other people's monsters. / I reached this after half a hundred years." In middle age, Walcott is appraising himself as a poet who "signed on to follow that gold thread / which linked the spines down a dark library shelf," and as an alienated individual as well—twice-divorced, we learn. Yet despite the success of "Greece" and poems like it, Walcott's greatest challenge may eventually be simply to accept himself: not so much as a "provincial elegist," or as any other role that might be labeled, but as a poet who, putting himself aside, can "relax" into his gifts.

Principal among these is a gift for imagery, linked to a prodigious and deftly employed vocabulary. Occasionally metaphors are, though not exactly mixed, packed into too small a space; at other times, a fine image is repeated or overexplained. (In "Jean Rhys," a lovely poem which pictures women "embayed / in the wickerwork armchairs," the "sallow" moon is also, unfortunately, "pharmaceutical," "feverish," and "malarial.") Yet more often, Walcott's imagery surprises the mind into new alignments. It is difficult to forget the "halved green coconuts" of Marine helmets abandoned on a Pacific island; or the "light rain and governments falling" in "A Sea Change," a nearly perfect poem which—graciously addressing in quatrains the political unrest in a tourist's tropical paradise—suggests what fusions of North and South Derek Walcott may yet accomplish.

MARY JO SALTER

Mary Jo Salter is a poet currently living in Japan.

THE NEW REPUBLIC CLASSIFIEDS

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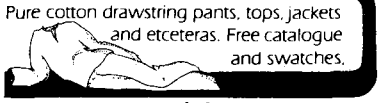

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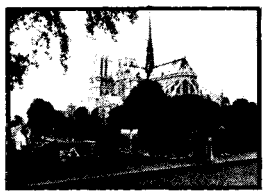

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Mind Rot

ACCORDING TO a recent profile in the *Washington Post*, the classy Republican Representative from New Jersey, Millicent Fenwick, observes a regular nighttime routine when in Washington. She gets home late from the office, whips up a dinner of spaghetti and white wine, and then retires to her bedroom, where she snuggles up with her radio, listening to call-in talk shows. "It's mind rot, of course, but I love it," she says. Actually, it's not *all* mind rot, and I love it, too. For the past seven months, I've been a radio talk show "host" on Washington's NBC affiliate, WRC, and it's been a real education. Granted, I've had a special opportunity. I inherited a Saturday morning time slot formerly occupied by columnist-raconteur Mark Shields, who attracted a high-minded audience, and I've also substituted for another columnist, Tom Braden, on the station's evening rush-hour show. So I've gotten to do serious subjects, rather than the fare that most talk hosts are forced to yammer about. My subjects are El Salvador, Reaganomics, human rights, sex education, creationism, etc. Others hosts have to talk about cats, orgasms, and how to tell your coworker he has bad breath. Those who cover the light topics have it harder, in fact, than I do. I rarely do an hour on the radio without an expert guest, so if no calls come in I can minutely examine the topic of the moment with at least one other human being. My idea of pure terror is to sit alone in the studio and try to gin up interest in a subject that listeners (if there are any) have absolutely no interest in calling in about. Yet other hosts daily face the prospect of talking to themselves for an hour, frantically appealing for people to call the magic number, 966-TALK, and getting no response. It's a tribute to their trolling ability when they do elicit calls, and it's a tribute to their courage when they don't.

TALK RADIO is built on controversy. WRC's popular "drive-time" show pitted Tom Braden against conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan for three years, until Buchanan decided to give it a rest. Lately the conservative place has been rotated among Howard Phillips, of the Conservative Caucus, Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, and Ron Nessen, former President Ford's press secretary. The show runs three hours, and the idea is to examine three front-page topics. The hosts interview experts on each topic, clash with each other, and then take calls. Talk hosts who lack a combatant need to "topicate" their subject well—that is, ask a question in such a way as to compel listeners to form an opinion, preferably a strong one.

SURE-FIRE TOPICS for attracting calls are Vietnam, El Salvador, Israel, and the press, but the tone of some of the calls is downright scary. The stab-in-the-back theory of why we lost Vietnam is widely believed. So is the notion that the United States is the scourge of peace-loving peoples everywhere. A shockingly high number of people believes that the U.S. is run by and for Israel. And the press is believed to be totally biased. *The Spike*, the novel by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, is repeatedly quoted to me on the air as "proof" that the press is infiltrated at its highest levels by Communist "agents of influence." Call-in shows obviously are not a scientific gauge of public opinion, and the producers who screen incoming calls can't keep out all the nuts, but what I've heard on the speaker in WRC's studio convinces me that something has rotted people's minds, but it isn't talk radio.

I AM MOST worried about the reputation of the American press in all of this. The infiltration thesis of *The Spike* is nonsense, but there is evidence that the press and TV have allowed themselves to be played like a violin section, especially in Central America. The best documentation is in an article in the current issue of the *Washington Journalism Review* by Shirley Christian, Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent for the *Miami Herald* and a frequent contributor to THE NEW REPUBLIC. Ms. Christian reviewed more than 500 stories and broadcasts about the Nicaraguan revolution by the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and CBS News, and found them dominated by "hatred" for dictator Anastasio Somoza and "a romantic view" of the opposition. The reporting, she says, ignored the ideological orientation—and the brutality—of the Sandinistas. The problem continues in El Salvador. Very little attention has been given to the composition of the leftist opposition and the brutalities it commits against holdouts in the population, and even against erring members of its own ranks.

THE NEW YORK TIMES did carry a story the other day—on page 10, unfortunately—on how the Salvadoran left tries to manipulate U.S. opinion. From Mexico City, reporter Philip Taubman quoted two guerrilla spokesmen as saying "we have to win the war inside the U.S.," and "the American media, especially television, turned public opinion against the war." *The Washington Post* gave front-page attention to press coverage of the Salvadoran conflict on February 28. The story makes you think it's news reporting that is rotting people's minds. "Covering the war . . . is a group grope," wrote correspondent Joanne Omang, in which the TV networks are in a mad chase for "bang-bang," not public enlightenment. Three top labor leaders from El Salvador were in Washington during the week of February 22. In a press conference they said that: (1) the Duarte government's record on human rights had improved in the past year, as the Reagan Administration contends; (2) the March 28 elections can be an important step toward democracy; (3) the guerrillas do not control up to one-third of the country, as often reported, but are losing popular support; and (4) the guerrilla movement would dry up if it weren't receiving weapons from outside the country. Not one word of what these labor leaders said has appeared in major U.S. newspapers or on television, although the AFL-CIO official who was squiring them around, William C. Doherty, did make an appearance on call-in radio. Guess whose show? Unfortunately, Doherty asserted on WRC that the American TV networks should ban appearances by Salvadoran leftists such as Cayetano Carpio, who was on the "Today Show," or Guillermo Ungo, who was to be on "Meet the Press." That would be mind rot for real. It's not the job of the press to help the left or right, but to be absolutely professional.

M. M. K.

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Misfortune Tellers

It won't work. It'll ruin the environment. It'll throw people out of work. Free enterprise can't manage it. God didn't intend us to have it. It'll kill us all.

Down-in-the-mouth forecasts like these are sometimes heard in public debates on technological undertakings, no matter how worthy. Pessimists too often seem to outnumber and outshout pioneers.

Discouraged supporters of promising innovations can take heart from a delightful book recently published in England. *Facts and Fallacies*, by Chris Morgan and David Langford, collects a number of history's misguided predictions.

Many of the items concern transportation technology. That's a field in which we at United Technologies have a special interest as designers and builders of such products as jet engines, helicopters, rockets, and aircraft and automotive systems and equipment.

A sampling of the now-amusing statements of old shows that shortsighted naysaying is nothing new—even by people who should know better:

- "Rail travel at high speed is not possible because passengers, unable to breathe, would die of asphyxia."—*English clergyman Dr. Dionysius Lardner, mid-19th century.*
- "The dangers [of gasoline-powered vehicles] are obvious...Stores of gasoline in the hands of people interested primarily in profit would constitute a fire and explosive hazard of the first rank. Horseless carriages propelled by gasoline engines might attain speeds of 14 or even 20 miles per hour...The development of this new power may displace the use of horses, which would wreck our agriculture. The discovery with which we are dealing involves forces of a nature too dangerous to fit into any of our usual concepts."—*unnamed authority, Congressional Record, 1875.*
- "Flight by machines heavier than air is unpractical and insignificant, if not utterly impossible."—*astronomer and mathematician Simon Newcomb, 1902.*
- "...ideas [of transatlantic airliners] are wholly visionary, and even if a machine could get across with one or two passengers, the expense would be prohibitive to any but the capitalist who could use his own yacht."—*astronomer William H. Pickering, 1910.*
- "...scientific investigation into the possibilities of jet propulsion has given no indication that this method can be a serious competitor to the propeller. We do not consider we should be justified in spending any time or money on it."—*Under Secretary of State, 1934.*
- "The acceleration which must result from the use of rockets...inevitably would damage the brain beyond repair."—*J.P. Lockhart-Mummery, author of a book on the future, 1936.*
- "Space travel is utter bilge."—*Dr. Richard Woolley, Britain's Astronomer Royal, 1956.*

Misfortune tellers with dark clouds in their crystal balls have always been with us. Happily, so have innovators with the vision and perseverance to reach successfully for the promise of technology.

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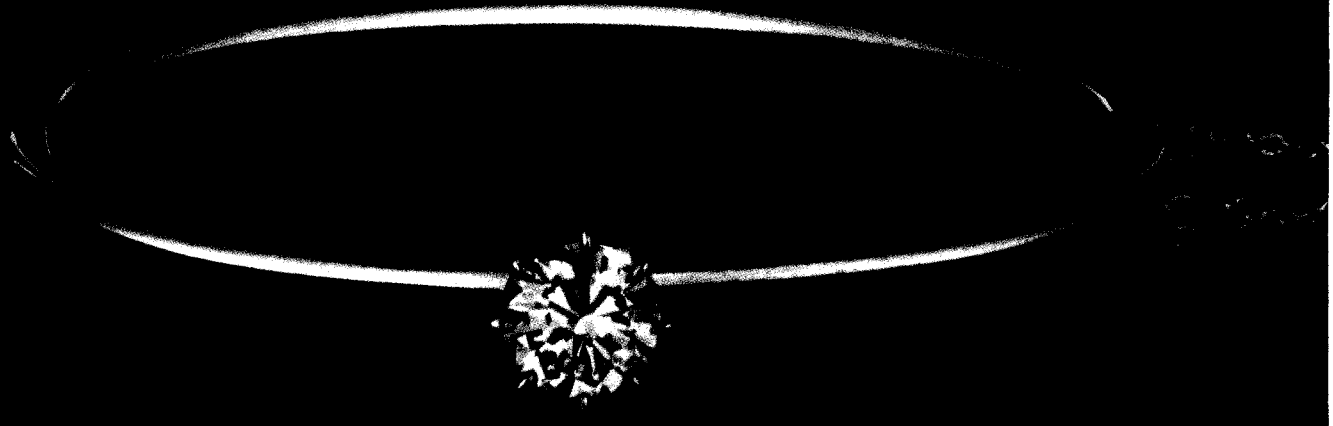
She can't wear a Ming vase to La Bohème.



Born out of fire and ice more than a hundred million years ago. Every diamond is unique. But a diamond this large is even more precious. A gift so rare, it can never be measured. Until you see the look in her eyes.

THE DIAMOND SOLITAIRE. A RARE GIFT.

The one and a quarter carat diamond bracelet shown is enlarged for detail.

A diamond is forever. De Beers

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